

BRITISH POLICY TOWARDS THE OTTOMAN
EMPIRE, 1908 - 1914

JOSEPH HELLER

LONDON SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS
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ABSTRACT

When the Young Turk Revolution took place in July 1908 Britain was careful to give its makers a cautious welcome but she limited her practical assistance to verbal sympathy and the supplying of a few advisers. Both the FO and the Embassy were critical of the new regime from the very beginning. This opinion was confirmed by the failure of the Young Turks to carry out their promises to establish a constitutional regime. However, the ineffectiveness of Britain's sympathy was demonstrated when the Porte happened to be governed by liberal statesmen at the time of the Ottoman Empire's most difficult external crises. It became manifest that Britain could not back her verbal sympathy with any substantial action through reasons concerned with the balance of power. Her friendship with Russia and the constant anxiety as to her position in the Gulf and Mesopotamia added to her fear of the impact of Pan-Islam upon the welfare of India and Egypt and also the failure of the new regime to establish equality for the Christians in the European provinces - these all served as excellent reasons for Britain to shelve her sympathy. The result was growing estrangement and enmity coupled with despair as to the ability of the Ottoman Empire to face successive external blows. The growth of German influence played only a secondary role in Britain's policy, particularly after the Ottoman defeat in late 1912. Britain, however, found herself, quite willingly, on the side of the Balkan States. Nothing, therefore, could have been done by Mallet, who tried to reverse the policy of both Whitehall and the Embassy. This futile attempt was foredoomed because the FO did not give any indication that

a new favourable policy was being contemplated. The Young Turks found themselves willy-nilly on Germany's side as a result of the Balkan Wars. This was realized by Britain only after the "Goeben" and the "Breslau" entered the Dardanelles.

PREFACE

The recent opening of the British archives for the years under discussion ended a long period during which writers were obliged to rely on Gooch & Temperley's British Documents on the Origins of the War, 1898-1914. Of course, they could use also the official publications of the other European governments which had taken part in the 'war-guilt' struggle. However, it is only too well known that these publications, though edited by independent historians, were too biased to produce a balanced picture. (See Appendix 1) The voluminous material available now in the archives confirms this impression. The great number of documents makes it possible for the first time to reconstruct British policy towards the Ottoman Empire in this period. There is only one isolated case in which use has been made of the British archives. F. Ahmad in his recent study on The Young Turks, the CUP in Turkish Politics, 1908-1914 (Oxford, 1969), has used the correspondence of the British Embassy at Constantinople with the Foreign Office as a major source for the understanding of an internal Ottoman subject. In an earlier article on "Great Britain's Relations with the Young Turks, 1908-1914" (Middle Eastern Studies, 1966), he attempted a new interpretation of what is, in fact, the subject of this study too. However, the fact that he used only a relatively small number of the documents available and the natural limits of an article left much room for new and more extensive research. Although he used the Lowther Papers and the Grey Papers, he did not make any use either of the highly important Hardinge Papers in the Cambridge University Library or of the Nicolson Papers in the Public Record Office, nor did

he use the extensive correspondence between the Foreign Office and the British diplomatic missions other than Constantinople.

Of the works which deal with the subject under discussion only one has in fact tried to bring together all the aspects of the problem. It is an unpublished Ph.D. dissertation (Cambridge, 1957), by M. Heymann, British Policy and Public Opinion on the Turkish Question, 1908-1914. The author exhausted all the printed material in western languages, but was unable to use the material available now. Nevertheless the part which deals with public opinion is definitely not dated. Other authors singled out questions like the Baghdad Railway or Macedonia, to take two examples, and neglect all other aspects.

Unfortunately no attempt has yet been made to make any equivalent research into the policies of either Germany (with the exception of Trumpener for the eve of the war), Austria or Italy where archive material is also available. This could further contribute to the understanding of the policies of the Powers towards the Ottoman Empire. Most regrettable is the lack of any study of Ottoman foreign policy except for an important article by Y.T. Kurat, "How Turkey Drifted into World War I". (Studies in International History, eds. Bourne & Watt, 1967).

An unsuccessful attempt had been made by the present writer to discover more private material from relations and friends of key-figures like Lowther, Fitzmaurice, Tyrrell, Marling, Babington-Smith and Hohler, but to no avail. The enigma of the extent to which Fitzmaurice influenced Sir Gerard Lowther, the Ambassador therefore still remains. It is clear

that Fitzmaurice's influence was indeed great, if not decisive, from the very beginning, but what remains unclear is the exact extent and reason for this extraordinary influence. A discovery of new material of people who had been on the staff of the British Embassy during these years could lead to a re-examination of the subject.

In writing this thesis I am greatly indebted to my supervisor Professor Elie Kedourie for his constant help and encouragement and most valuable criticisms. I am also grateful to Professor Mayer Vereté, my teacher in the Hebrew University, Jerusalem for his help and advice. He was the first to encourage me in this research. I would like also to thank Dr. M.S. Anderson, who supervised me for one year, and to my teacher Professor J.L. Talmon, of the Hebrew University, for their assistance. I am also indebted to Dr. M. Heymann, who allowed me to read his Ph.D. thesis before I came to England. I am thankful to the Friends of the Hebrew University whose funds enabled me to write this study, and also to their secretary Dr. W. Zander. I would like to thank the staffs of Public Record Office, Cambridge University Library, British Museum, School of Oriental and African Studies, Senate House and the London School of Economics. Finally I would like to thank my friend Mr. Barry B. Davis for his valuable criticisms. He and Mr. D. Neumann assisted me in polishing my English.

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ABBREVIATIONS

BD Gooch & Temperley, British Documents on the Origins
of the War, 1898-1914. 11 Vols.

BP Bertie Papers.

GP Grey Papers.

HP Hardinge Papers.

LP Lowther Papers.

NP Nicolson Papers.

VP Vambery Papers.

INTRODUCTION

During the second half of the nineteenth century from the Crimean war until the outbreak of the First World War only few countries confronted successive British Government with the same complexity of problems as did the Ottoman Empire. The main feature of British policy during this period was a gradual change from friendliness, culminating in the Crimean war and the Eastern Crisis of 1877-78, and associated with eminent British statesmen like Palmerston, Stratford Canning and Disraeli, to one of coldness and occasional hostility epitomized in the person of Gladstone. This reached its peak at Reval on the eve of the Young Turk Revolution. The Revolution itself ended-up an almost crescendo-like development by bringing about another volte face on the part of Britain. Such a dramatic transformation did not occur in Britain's policy during this period in relation with any other country. The unique circumstances which brought about this change from enmity back to friendliness originated from a certain group who called themselves the Committee of Union and Progress, which aimed at a revolutionary breakthrough to save the Ottoman Empire from European intrigues and from Hamidian despotism. Significantly, so far as both Abdul-Hamid and the Young Turks were concerned, British policy was no more than an intrigue to destroy the Ottoman Empire itself.

But the uniqueness of Britain's policy towards the Ottoman Empire could not only be described as a gradual deterioration of relations which occur too frequently between two countries. The significant factor was that Britain pretended to reform the Ottoman Empire itself

from within, a clear case of foreign intervention in another country's internal affairs, while simultaneously claiming to defend its independence and integrity. These two incompatible goals already proved a failure at the Congress of Berlin since the primary object was to save the European Concert and not the Ottoman Empire. The Treaty of Berlin itself was no more than an unsuccessful attempt to guarantee both the success of reform and the integrity of the Empire. However, by reform Europe meant not the reform of the Empire and the Sultan's Moslem subjects but rather that of his Christian subjects. Naturally this could never be achieved since the Christian subjects were increasingly becoming the proteges of some Balkan States who had in turn their own protectors. In such circumstances no country in the world could consolidate itself.

Not the least amongst Britain's reform remedies was the establishment of constitutional and parliamentary rule in the Ottoman Empire. Once this kind of rule had been established, alien as it was to such a country, all the problems of the Ottoman Empire, external and internal, would be immediately solved. It was for the Young Turk Revolution itself to come and demonstrate that this was nothing more than a utopia. Britain was not the last among the European Powers to assent to the policy which had already condemned the Ottoman Empire of Abdul Hamid to death by both direct and indirect encouragement given to the Balkan States. Since it had become an unshaken belief that Abdul-Hamid was the worst ruler Europe had ever known, and since nobody was ready to take a different view of the

ambitions and political beliefs of the Bulgarians, Serbs, Greeks or Armenians, especially after the Bulgarian massacres in 1876 and the Armenian massacres in the 1890's, it was only too easy in such circumstances to justify an anti-Ottoman policy. The policy which Britain was conducting towards the Ottoman Empire was in the first place based on prejudices she too readily accepted and adopted.

As this was the basis of the policy developed in Britain, it was not too difficult to attach to it other dimensions which deepened and widened the enmity. This was first of all exemplified in the occupation of Egypt in 1882, the tension created over the Baghdad Railway, the danger to British interests in the Persian Gulf and by the Entente with Russia in 1907. Between these two crucial dates - 1882 - 1907 - in the history of British policy towards the Ottoman Empire it was only too well proved that the question of the Christian subjects of the Sultan could be solved only by cutting the Gordian knot, namely by the further amputation of the Empire. The pleas of Abdul-Hamid that the Powers should also make representations in Sofia and Athens were dismissed as irrelevant since he was regarded as alone responsible for the deteriorating situation in the European provinces. So much so that at the beginning of 1908 Sir Nicolas O'Connor, the British Ambassador since 1898, drew a picture which was one of near crisis: "The relations between Great Britain and Turkey so far as they depend upon the Sultan are little more than tolerable. The policy of HMG with regard to Macedonia, Armenia and the other oppressed nationalities is objectionable and even hateful." Indeed, the relations were so bad that O'Connor refused to make any prediction

since he felt too heavily the burden of his nine predecessors who had served as Ambassadors to Abdul-Hamid whose forecasts of the events had not stood the test of time "save in so far as these predictions have been based on general lines indicative of the obstructive policy of the Sovereign and the steadily increasing financial and administrative disorganisation in all the Departments of the Government."¹ However, O'Connor failed to mention that "obstructive" as Abdul-Hamid might have been he was, after all, acting within his legitimate rights. Besides the Powers could always deal easily with such obstructions. The naval demonstration over the financial commission for Macedonia in 1905 and the dispute over the boundaries of Sinai in 1906 were not isolated examples. Little did the makers of British foreign policy know that the Young Turks, whom they had considered for sometime as saviours, would be less vulnerable than the Sultan when it came to the crunch.

Both contemporaries and later observers admitted that the Young Turk Revolution resulted from the apprehension of the Young Turks lest Macedonia be torn away by Russia and England at Reval. Alas, this was not the case. The Reval meeting was just another step in Anglo-Russian rapprochement with respect to the Near East. Nevertheless, the eruption of the Young Turk Revolution made Reval simply the first cause of the Revolution.

But this looked somewhat different from the British point of view. Britain was working hard to impose different reforms upon the

¹Annual Report for Turkey for the Year 1907, in: O'Connor to Grey, 13.1.08. No.21. BD.V.p.43.

Macedonian provinces of the Ottoman Empire. The Blue Books which were published in the years before the Revolution indicated the kind of policy upon which both Conservatives and Liberal Governments embarked.

The year 1908 was just that year which happened to be the last one in the long and uninterrupted attempt to reform the Ottoman Empire. Britain was only too ready to launch this policy together with the other European Powers. Germany was clearly the least co-operative.¹ But the chances to fulfil a concerted reform in Macedonia rather dwindled when at the beginning of 1908 Aehrenthal initiated his Novibazar Railway Scheme after he had achieved the Sultan's consent. The coincidence which thus occurred between the reform negotiations and the Sultan's Irade incensed Grey because it made "it appear that while we are credited at Constantinople with responsibility for initiating Macedonian Reform proposals, other Powers get concessions from the Sultan by obstructing them."² Moreover, the British Ambassador rejected Aehrenthal's analogy of his policy and the British line with regard to the 3% addition to the Ottoman duties: "our Reform policy was largely dictated by humanitarian ideas, but still we have not been above making our consent on that occasion dependent upon the grant of certain demands in return for our sacrifices."³ No British

¹ Barclay to Hardinge. 15.4.08. Pte. HP 11.
Hardinge to Buchanan. 2.6.08. Pte. Ibid 15.

² Grey to Nicolson, 10.2.08 No.45. B.D.V. No.251. S. Wank, "Aehrenthal and the Sanjak of Novi-Bazar Railway Project - a Re-Appraisal." The Slavonic and East European Review (1964), pp.343/69.

³ Goschen to Grey, 15.2.08, No.17, very conf. B.D.V. No.236.

statesman or diplomat could admit this clear contradiction in British policy between its reform policy and its decision to use economic privileges as a political leverage.

Sir N. O'Connor, the British Ambassador at Constantinople, suggested to Grey a drastic change in policy, since an appointment of a Christian Governor-General would be interpreted as an anti-Islamic policy: "I have never objected to proposals which I thought would merely antagonise the Sultan, from whose favour we get so few material advantages, but we have now to look beyond the present regime and to take heed of Moslem prejudices and feelings so far as we possibly can if we wish to avoid encouraging an anti-British feeling in the minds of the vast majority of the Moslems throughout the Empire ... After all the Macedonian question is a temporary embroglio ... any line of policy that might alienate the sympathy of the Mussulam population of Turkey might be far reaching in its effects."¹ On the same day Sir A. Nicolson also criticised Whitehall policy, calling for co-ordination with Russia in view of the future regrouping of the Powers.² But Grey both in his diplomatic correspondence and in Parliament remained a strong believer in the European Concert, though it was to be replaced in reality, although in his own mind rather gradually, by the development of the Entente.³ He admitted that Macedonia could not be defined under any national category and there was no question of "liberating" it. Grey admitted in Parliament that Britain favoured a Concert policy because

¹ O'Connor to Grey, 18.2.08. Pte. BD.V. No.186.

² Nicolson to Grey, 18.2.08. No.85, Ibid. No.188.

³ Grey to Lascelles, 24.2.08. No.59. ibid. No.238. Hansard, House of Commons. 4th series vol.184. cols. 1707/8. 25.2.08.

it served as a guarantee against a European war but he did not deny the difficulties.¹

At the beginning of March Britain launched a new diplomatic campaign. Seeking the support of the Powers, Grey warned them that a division amongst them might raise the "Turkish question" without solving that of Macedonia. He repeated his proposal to reduce the Ottoman army in Macedonia, to guarantee the integrity and external security of this province and to press upon the Balkan States to prevent the passage of bands. It is significant that Grey believed that his proposals did not involve the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire.² It was Izvolsky who understood that the idea of a Governor-General was "too great a departure from the administrative system of the Porte."³ Grey was thus persuaded to mitigate his proposal since he believed that if this problem would not be tackled "the fire might spread to Bulgaria, and then there would be war. The past experience had been that the Turks always came out of war with a loss of territory."⁴ Even the Balkan Committee circles admitted that Grey exceeded their hopes when he "boldly" demanded a Christian Governor for Macedonia.⁵

Nevertheless, Grey complained that a "most unfair share of the disagreeable work in Constantinople" had been thrown upon the British

¹Ibid., Cols.1700/1.

²Grey to Bertie etc., 3.3.08. Turkey No.1 (1908) A. & P. (1908) CXXV, pp. 587/96.

³Nicolson to Grey, 4.3.08. BD.V. Pte.No.189.

⁴Grey to Goschen, 4.3.08. No.31. BD.V. No.245.

⁵G.P. Gooch, Under Six Reigns (London, 1958), p.133.

Embassy since the Concert had become a farce.¹ Indeed, he was very keen to find a solution; alas, this could be achieved only by putting "all our cards on the table at the best opportunity."²

But the Powers were still far away from the British line. Thus, while Russian policy was interpreted in the Foreign Office as pro-Bulgarian, the British view was that Balkan nationalism should be kept at bay, and that Bulgarian national aspirations should be postponed for seven years.³

At about that time the British Government were forced to watch more carefully the deteriorating situation in the Armenian provinces. But the Foreign Office was worried what answer should be given to the "Friends of Armenia" no less than to find a solution for the problem itself.⁴ The Armenian "fedai", according to the British Consul, considered that the policy of the Powers in Macedonia was "practically terrorism", when they wished to get out anything from the Sultan. But they knew very well that European intervention for the amelioration of their conditions was out of the question. Their conclusion was obvious: to attain their aim also by a policy of terrorism. Thus the Tashnaks were using every effort to induce the Young Turks and the Kurds to join in their movement.⁵

¹Grey to Goschen, 11.3.08. Pte. BD.V. No.191.

²Grey to Nicolson, 17.3.08. Pte. Ibid., No.192.

³Hardinge to Nicolson, 17.3.08. Pte. Ibid., No.193.

⁴Barclay to Grey, 18.3.08. No.130. FO/371/533, minute by Parker.

⁵Dickson to Barclay, Van. 9.2.08. No.3 in: Ibid.

While admitting that the Armenian situation had become critical, Britain did no more than make representations to the Porte and discuss the abortive suggestions to resettle destitute Armenians in British ruled provinces.¹ Here, as in Macedonia, the belief in the Foreign Office was that efforts should be made to secure better administration.² The dilemma of the Armenian question remained very much the business of the Consuls. Only the Consul at Van could afford the comment: "The Christian inhabitants of Macedonia, and the methods of governing them, have caused so much worry and European interference to the Turks that they may be pardoned the desire to try to keep their Asiatic possessions free from similar intervention ... the Armenians ... are an intriguing, unsympathetic race, with high national aspirations and a number of revolutionary organisations, whose main object is, or was, to endeavour to attract European intervention ... Thus the Turks may be excused their desire to suppress this source of trouble ... so long as the revolutionary movement is prominent among the Armenians, so long will their gradual extermination continue, with the approval of Europe."³ In the Foreign Office there was no enthusiasm for the hope of the Armenian Union of Paris that the question should be dealt with in Reval.⁴ On May 25 Mr. Lynch asked in Parliament if the Foreign Secretary could give more information respecting the recent disturbances in Van. Oliphant minuted the real feeling of the Foreign

¹ Colonial Office to Foreign Office 14.2.08. FO/371/533/523 U.S. of State Colonial Office to U.-S. of State Foreign Office 14.2.08. Ibid. S. to S. 23.3.08. FO/371/533/10129.

² Grey to Barclay, 7.5.08. No.169. Ibid.

³ Dickson to Barclay, 13.4.08. No.12 in: Barclay to Grey, 12.5.08. No.252.

⁴ Armenian Union of Paris to Grey, 27.5.08. FO/371/533/18531.

Office: "To give much information would draw attention to the subject, thus giving hope to the Armenians and encouragement to the Fedai."¹

In the meantime the policy of concession-hunting continued. The first instruction that Mr. Barclay, the Charge d'Affaires, had to fulfil was to obtain an Irade for the Quays Company, and Hardinge told him that if he were to succeed it would be regarded as "a feather in your cap."² This showed the other side of the coin, as in the Macedonian reform Britain claimed to have no amour propre.

As the struggle for reform and concession was getting harder, the criticism also mounted. Obviously it came mainly from Constantinople. Thus, Sir A. Block informed Hardinge that so long as Abdul-Hamid was in power there was no chance of improvement and reform: "As Caliph he cannot do otherwise. But the financial pressure may one day force him to yield to the necessity for financial control."³

Another severe critic of British policy was the Chief Dragoman of the Embassy who pointed out the contradictory character of Britain's policy. While following a line of furthering British commercial interests, they also pursued one of an entirely different kind in Macedonia, Armenia, the Ottoman-Persian boundary, etc.⁴ This was

¹Minute by L. Oliphant. FO/371/533/19078.

²Hardinge to Barclay, 24.3.08. Pte. HP,13.

³Block to Hardinge, 25.3.08. Pte. HP,11.

⁴The same point was later raised by Hohler, the First Secretary of the Embassy, Sir T.B. Hohler. See his: Diplomatic Petrel (London, 1942), p.151., D.C.M. Platt, Finance Trade, (London, 1968), pp.187-8 ff.

regarded as hostile by the Sultan and therefore Britain could not expect from a "highly centralised theocracy" any economic concessions. As long as the Macedonian policy prevailed the British Ambassador "must necessarily find himself in the equivocal, if not impossible position of having to goad the Sultan with the pinpricks of reform proposals while being expected to score in the commercial line successes which were dependent on the Sultan's goodwill." Fitzmaurice's forecast for the next few years was one of great anxiety to Britain as "big events" might happen at Constantinople. Later on, after the Revolution, he revealed that he had told both O'Conor and Barclay that the Macedonian policy was "insane". He claimed that he had felt that the "Turk" was "in the hour before the dawn of his renewed national existence", which convinced him that the Macedonian policy was a "potential anachronism".¹

But in the Foreign Office the Macedonian policy was still in its full swing. Hardinge believed that the Concert could still be relied upon, and although Germany and Austria would be obstructive at first, they would change their minds later, though reluctantly. This could be done, as Nicolson argued, only by achieving first an understanding with Russia.² The Balkan Committee backed by a strong body of M.P's supported Grey's policy.³ The Foreign Office as usual found it

¹Fitzmaurice to Tyrrell, 12.4.08. Pte. BD.V. No.196. Same to Same, 25.8.08. Pte. Ibid. No.210 Ed. On Fitzmaurice's important position at Constantinople see: Sir R. Bullard, The Camels must Go (London, 1961), pp.62-4. Sir A. Ryan, The Last of the Dragomans, (London, 1951), p.¹⁶A. Herbert, Ben Kendim, A Record of Eastern Travel (London, 1923), p.268. Sir R. Vansittart, The Mist Procession (London, 1957), p.68/9; in: The Cambridge History of British Foreign Policy, Vol.III, he was regarded as an eminence grise behind his chiefs in the Embassy, p.621.

²Hardinge to Nicolson, 13.4.08. Pte. BD.V. No.194.

³The Balkan Committee Resolution on Macedonia. 9.4.08. FO/371/536/12387 and the Statement signed by 107 M.P's, 10.4.08, expressing their "satisfaction" at Grey's recent speech, Ibid., File No.12491.

necessary to support its policy by publishing a Blue Book which described in great detail the disorders in Macedonia.¹ Hardinge gave a deeper insight to Foreign Office-public opinion relations: "We do not mind how much you bowdlerize the blue book, as long as we are able to publish something; with us it is really the quantity and not the quality that we want for the House of Commons." Hardinge insisted on a strong line in Constantinople otherwise Britain would suffer another defeat, and the initiative would be taken again by Marschall von Bieberstein. The policy of coercion and pressure on the Sultan continued not only concerning Macedonia but also in the field of concession-hunting. The still unsuccessful effort to obtain the Quays concession incensed the Foreign Office. "The time will come when we and the French will have to tell the Sultan that it is not a privilege that we are seeking but our right."² Fitzmaurice and Block had critical views about the prospects of British policy which did not find an echo at the Foreign Office.

Even in the conversation between Grey and the retiring Ottoman Charge d'Affaires, Grey measured the Ottoman attitude to Britain through the ups and downs of the situation in Macedonia alone. He merely reiterated the policy of putting the whole responsibility on the Porte's shoulders: "We had no bad disposition whatever towards Turkey, but the Porte did not give us a chance of improving our relations with them." Grey indicated that he had approved in a speech

¹ Turkey No.3 (1908) May 1908 A. & P. CXXV (1908) pp.607/889.

² Hardinge to Barclay, 19.5.08. Pte* He made this comment in connection with the preparation of an Armenian Blue Book.

*HP, 13.

to the Balkan Committee, a well-known centre of anti-Ottoman policy, the improvement of the civil administration. But unfortunately the Porte did not put a stop to the outrages of the Bands which had been allowed to increase and become worse than ever. Nevertheless, he expressed faith in Hilmi as Inspector-General, but felt that he had been paralysed by orders from the Palace, and had thus prevented "decent government."¹

Another issue which also involved British opposition, though its significance was exaggerated, was the Baghdad Railway. In March Hardinge came out with a new plan to compete with the Baghdad Railway. He suggested an Anglo-Russian railway from Julfa on the Russo-Persian border to the Persian Gulf (Abu Musa): "It would reduce the Baghdad Railway to a purely local railway ... This would be the quickest and the best route for both passengers, mails and merchandise to the Persian Gulf and would completely crowd out the Baghdad Railway." Here the rapprochement with the Russian Government was made more difficult by the opposition of the Indian Government.² But soon the struggle shifted again to the Baghdad Railway itself. Marschall was pressing the Sultan to extend the time limit on the 3% customs increase which had been instituted in April of the previous year. Grey was disturbed lest the Macedonian deficit would not be paid off. In that case the British Government thought that it was entitled to withdraw its consent.³

¹Grey to Barclay, 26.5.08. Pte. BD.V. No.197.

²Hardinge to Nicolson, 17.3.08. Pte. BD.VI. No.254.

³Barclay to Grey, 3.4.08, tel.No.85, Ibid., No.255. Grey to Barclay, 21.5.08, tel. No.80, Ibid., No.262.

The Ottoman Council of Ministers sent a Mazbata to the Sultan in favour of the German scheme. This caused a strong reaction in the Foreign Office. The Head of the Eastern Department, Sir L. Mallet, regarded this policy as: "Most cynical proceeding on the part of the German Government and deserves showing up in Parliament, quite as much as the Austrian Railway scheme."¹ Mallet recommended a strong line and Hardinge hoped for French co-operation. He meant that the Porte could hope to raise a loan in the Paris market only if following British wishes in Macedonia, the Baghdad Railway and the Quays Company. Hardinge believed that the Germans could be brought to reason only if an Anglo-Russian agreement could be achieved in regard to a line from Julfa to the Gulf.² In Constantinople Block was pessimistic as to the German ability to finance the "gigantic scheme" of extending the Baghdad Railway to Helif. He was of the opinion that a reform of the financial administration of the Empire was first needed. Block deplored that Britain did not possess the influence required to effect such a reform. "Let us hope," he concluded, "that Lowther will gradually create for himself such a position."³ He was not hopeful of co-operation with the French, as their financiers had no patriotism. On the other hand he praised the Germans who began "by watering the root of the tree. I think sometimes we are watering the top of branches. There is no doubt that the railways bring the light of civilization, better administration, better police, tranquillity, commerce and education." Moreover, the Germans claimed that even

¹ Barclay to Grey, 19.5.08. tel. No.110. Ibid., No.259. Same to Same 20.5.08. tel. No.111. Ibid., No.260. Minute by Mallet on tel.No.110.

² Ibid., minutes by Hardinge and Grey. Grey to Bertie, 21.5.08. No.220A. Secret. Ibid., No.263. Memorandum communicated to M.Pichon. 27.5.08. Ibid., No.265.

³ Block to Hardinge. 22.5.08. Pte. MP,11.

in Macedonia better government could be achieved by economic reform and railways. He noted the considerable progress which the Ottoman Empire had made since 1850. "I sometimes think", Block concluded, "we want to hustle the East too fast ... we have deprived ourselves of all influence for good in the councils of the Porte, and have imperilled our own interests, commercial and political."¹

At the beginning of June Hardinge was rather happy over the advance of Macedonian policy and believed that Britain was "very close" to an agreement with Russia. He was sure that in Reval the agreement made with Russia the previous year would now be completed. The contradictory policy of the British Government was followed now rather vigorously by Grey and Hardinge. The latter was "very glad" that Barclay had spoken to the Sultan about the Quays Concession, but if he would be unable to obtain it before Lowther's arrival, then this matter would be a sine qua non or a sign of goodwill towards him on his first appointment as Ambassador.²

For the makers of British foreign policy the rapprochement with Russia over Macedonia was a key to the greatly desired revival of the Six Powers Concert towards the Ottoman Empire. After the first step would be completed in Reval, "it will be our business to get the assent of the Powers - a matter which will ... be extremely difficult!"³

¹ Same to Same 28.5.08. Pte. HP, 11.

² Hardinge to Barclay, 2.6.08. Pte. HP, 13.

³ Hardinge to Buchanan, 2.6.08. Pte. Ibid.

Hardinge saw in the Reval meetings (9-10.6) a great success: "I cannot help thinking that this direct exchange of views between the two Foreign Offices will be beneficial and facilitate the solution of most of our pending questions."

For Izvolsky it was even more important to ensure that Germany would agree with an agreement concerning Macedonia. The military might of Germany on the frontier and her "nervousness" over future developments in European politics served as a background for the formulation of Russia's policy in Macedonia. This Russian attitude forced Britain to relax their line too. This was bound to take place since Hardinge was convinced that "it was absolutely necessary that England and Russia should maintain towards each other the same cordial and friendly relations as now exist between England and France. "Moreover, both Powers were inspired more than England and France by an identity of interests of which a solution of the Macedonian problem was not the least." It was Grey himself who already said in Parliament that there was no purpose in negotiating "any new treaty or convention at Reval". The rapprochement was necessary for England for the sake of the preservation of the balance of power because Germany's naval plans involved a danger to England. Hence England's desire that Russia should be as strong as possible "on land and on sea."¹

So far as Macedonia was concerned Britain accepted the main Russian demand: giving up the idea of a Christian Governor's idea for strengthening the position of Hilmi, emphasising their readiness

¹Memorandum by Hardinge. 12.6.08. BD.W. No.195. Izvolsky to Benckendorff. 5(18).6.08. Ibid., pp.245/6.

to relax their anti-Ottoman policy, and promising to be "anxious to meet the possible charge that might be made of an infringement of the sovereign rights of the Sultan, and at the same time to "save the Sultan's face." Britain could rely now on the "full support" of Russia in Macedonian affairs.

This understanding with England suited Russia as much as England. Izvolsky exclaimed that relations with Austria could not be the same again after Aehrenthal's act in Novibazar.¹

As far as the Ottoman Empire was concerned Reval meant, in fact, a relaxation of the British reform policy, but it came too late. The myth already prevailed amongst the Young Turks that England and Russia had actually combined in a new scheme of anti-Ottoman policy in their meeting in Reval. They decided therefore to strike earlier than had been decided because: "If the Anglo-Russian plan were to be put into effect, they might say goodbye to Macedonia, and probably ere long to the whole of Turkey in Europe. They knew that resistance on the part of their Sultan was not to be looked for, and that if this tutelage were carried out it would amount to an acceptance by Europe of the principle that Turkey was unable to manage her own affairs. It was justifiable and a commendable feeling."²

England and Russia continued their negotiations after Reval. Hardinge informed Barclay that the British Government had arrived at a "complete agreement" on the Macedonian reforms, but both sides

¹ Ibid.

² Ext. from Annual Report for Turkey for the Year 1908. Encl. in: Lowther to Grey, 17.2.09. No.105. BD.W. p.249.

were still to prepare notes, the British on the mobile force and the Russians on the general scheme of reform. No longer pressing for a Christian Governor, Hardinge's "only hope" was that Izvolsky would make it perfectly clear that the Inspector-General was to have "very full powers". Britain, however, agreed to leave Macedonia in the hands of Hilmi, the Sultan's representative. In the meantime the concession-hunting policy continued. Hardinge was "very glad" that Barclay, now the Minister at Constantinople, obtained "some sort" of Iradé for the Quays Company.¹

At this stage the British Government could only hope that no one would disturb the reform scheme as in the case of Novibazar. As the Bulgarians attempted to take military action in Macedonia, Hardinge warned that this might "precipitate action by other Powers - in fact I believe it would end by a general flare-up in the Balkans." In the Foreign Office the national and personal ambitions of Prince Ferdinand were well known.²

At the end of June matters in Macedonia were worse than ever mainly due to fighting between Serb and Greek bands on one side and Bulgarians on the other. Nevertheless, the Foreign Office was against making representations at Sofia and Belgrade.³ Britain was suspicious of Bulgaria's intentions as the latter rejected the reform policy. Moreover, in the Foreign Office they became more sceptical than ever as to the possibility of achieving the co-operation of Germany and Austria. British officials in the Foreign Office began, after Reval, to think more and more in terms of re-grouping

¹Hardinge to Barclay. 16.6.08. Pte. HP,13.

²Hardinge to Buchanan, 16.6.08. Pte. HP,13.

³Same to Same. 30.6.08. Pte. Ibid.

of the Powers and the breakdown of the Concert was gradually admitted.¹

After Reval Germany renounced the idea of a discussion à quatre regarding the Baghdad Railway, as she was afraid that she would be in a minority. She naturally preferred to discuss that matter with Britain alone. This was far from the mind of the British Government especially after the recent growing understanding with Russia.² Balance of power considerations stiffened the already existing anti-Ottoman line in the Foreign Office. Sir L. Mallet, realizing that Britain might be accused of "uncompromising stiffness", blamed the Germans as responsible for this as they were influenced by "Bismarckian principles"³ by which he probably meant the German policy of weakening the Entente, which would bring Britain back to isolation.

The eve of the Young Turk Revolution found the makers of British foreign policy deeply committed to the traditional "Turcophobia" of successive British Governments. The relaxation of the reform policy was only a symptom of a new European re-grouping and not an admission that the reform principle had failed. Moreover, no change occurred over the concession-hunting policy where competition and jealousy were strong as ever and the impasse over the Baghdad Railway was the most striking example of this kind of policy.

So, after all, the Young Turk Revolution did not arise from a

¹ Same to Same. 14.7.08. Pte. Ibid.

² Memorandum respecting the Baghdad Railway. Foreign Office 3.7.08 (by L.Mallet), BD.VI.No.266. Grey to de Salis 13.7.08 No.176. Secret.Ibid No.267. Note by Grey to Hardinge's minute 25.6.08. Ibid., Ed.Note p.3

³ Minute by Mallet. Grey to de Salis, 13.7.08. No.176.Secret.Ibid., minute by Grey.

mistaken understanding of the situation. On the contrary, the revolutionaries had shown an excellent understanding of the position of the Ottoman Empire vis-à-vis the European Powers, including Germany. They were mistaken only in detail, namely, as far as the Reval meeting was concerned, but they grasped the precise meaning of the European policy towards their country. This point was admitted by the British Ambassador after the Revolution and justified by him as true judgement.¹

The dilemma which the Foreign Office refused to solve because of balance of power considerations and which a man like Fitzmaurice did not take into account, was finally solved by the Young Turks.

The main object of this work would be to discuss and analyse the growth and development of British policy on two levels: the Embassy and the Foreign Office. Another and more difficult task would be to try to assess the influence of the different Embassies on decision-making in the Foreign Office. Moreover, this work would try to show the important and crucial influence of European and Imperial considerations upon the formulation of this policy.

British policy towards the Ottoman Empire was far from being a problem which was limited only to the Foreign Office and the Embassy at Constantinople. It was a subject of concern to British diplomatic missions in most of the European capitals, to the Government of India and to the British authorities in Egypt. The Admiralty, the Board of

¹ Cf. p.17.n.2.

Trade and above all the India Office had an important impact on policy of the Foreign Office. But their influence was limited to their responsibilities, whether these were questions of naval instructors to the Ottoman Navy, additional Customs dues and railway or other economic concessions, or British influence in the Persian Gulf.

Thus, inevitably, British policy was formulated largely by the Foreign Secretary Sir Edward Grey, and his Permanent Under-Secretaries, Sir Charles Hardinge and Sir Arthur Nicolson. They were obviously influenced by Ambassadors, Consuls, Dragomans and the Foreign Office officials, journalists, financiers and others who took an interest in the Ottoman Empire. Of course, prejudices and bitter, long-standing memories of the British experience in connection with the Ottoman Empire, or with the irritating and hostile "Eastern Question", which served as a synonym to indicate the creeping destruction of this Empire, played also a considerable role in the formulation of this policy. Since, after all, the setbacks suffered by the Porte between 1877 and 1908 left important scars on Britain too.

The object of this work is not to deal with the origins of the First World War, an aim which tends to lead to a distortion of the real policies of the Powers. It is hoped to assess the development and growth of British policy towards the Ottoman Empire from the Young Turk Revolution to the British Declaration of War, without having the 'war-guilt question' too much in mind.¹

¹ See: Appendix: Gooch, Temperley, The Origins of the War and British Policy towards the Ottoman Empire.

CHAPTER 1

The Embassy, the Foreign Office and the "Constitutional Movement".

Hopes, Promises and Doubts*

The first telegraphic report on the revolutionary events was sent on 8 August and reached the Foreign Office on the same day, but was seen only the day after by the Eastern Department officials, the Permanent Under-Secretary, Sir C. Hardinge, and the Foreign Secretary himself, Sir E. Grey. This included the military mutiny at Resna on 3 July and the murder of Shemsi Pasha, events which were later regarded as the actual beginnings of the Revolution.¹ It was only after more detailed reports had reached the Foreign Office that the first important comments were made on 14 July. Nevertheless, the importance of these events was fully grasped by the lower echelons of the Foreign Office, and entirely misunderstood by the actual head of the Office. "This movement, if it grows, will be an important factor in the Macedonian situation" minuted H. Norman, an Assistant Clerk in the Eastern Department.² "If the 'Young Turks' join the Bulgarian bands, this fact may make the mobile force more palatable to the Sultan", commented Hardinge.³ Neither did he mention the revolutionary events in Macedonia in a private letter to Barclay, the Minister Plenipotentiary at Constantinople. He was

¹ Barclay to Grey, 8.7.08. tel.No.160. Minutes F.O/371/544.

² Same to Same 9.7.08. No.378. Minutes.

³ Ibid., also: Same to Same 23.6.08.No.353. Minutes.

*On the background of the Revolution see: F. Ahmad, The Young Turks ... (Oxford, 1969). E.E. Ramsaur, The Young Turks (Princeton, 1957). B. Lewis, The Emergence of Modern Turkey (Oxford, 1968). For contemporary accounts: E.F. Knight, The Awakening of Turkey (London 1909). G.F. Abbott, Turkey in Transition (London, 1909).

entirely preoccupied with getting an agreement first with Russia and then with the Powers, though he realised that Germany, Austria and Bulgaria might disturb the success of the Reform policy.¹

In fact, not only did the Permanent Under-Secretary underrate the new situation, but so did Barclay himself: "The Young Turk rising, whether it would do nothing or proves the prelude of a bigger movement, is most unfortunate, as it must be a strong card in the hands of the anti-Reform Powers, who will no doubt urge that it is inopportune at a moment when the Sultan's authority is being challenged.."

As far as the revolutionary events themselves were concerned, the only source of information was in practice the Vice-Consul at Monastir.

The Consul-General at Salonica, who was a sort of intermediary between the Consulate at Monastir and the Embassy, was unable to add anything to the bare record of facts.² Neither could Barclay add more to what

he considered a danger to the Reform policy. On 18 July he still could not tell whether the rising was likely "to fizzle out or spread".

Moreover, he regretted that the Sultan had not yet sent fresh forces against the "insurgents".³ At the end of the third week in July the Revolution was considered as an accomplished fact in the Foreign Office, and as a blessing by H. Norman: "The wonder is that the movement did not come to a head long ago considering the system of government under which these people are condemned to live."

While the Foreign Office was slowly heading towards the view that

¹Hardinge to Barclay, 14.7.08. Pte. HP,13. Hardinge to Buchanan, 14.7.08. Pte. Ibid.

²Barclay to Hardinge, 15.7.08. Pte. HP,11.

³Same to Same 18.7.08. Pte. Ibid.

the Young Turks were on the way to dominate the situation, in the Embassy at Constantinople only Fitzmaurice saw that the Constitutional movement would win the day.¹ The situation was considered in the Foreign Office as "most serious" as the Bulgarians were inclined to favour the overtures of the Young Turks while the Greeks refused.²

Only on 22 July the important progress made by the Young Turks appeared to the top echelons of the Foreign Office as "beginning to have a striking resemblance to revolution."³

At long last, the crucial events of 23-24 July, in which Abdul-Hamid abdicated his absolute power, resulted in a complete change of opinion both in London and Constantinople. In Constantinople, the first to be convinced by the Young Turks victory, apart from Fitzmaurice, was Block, who condemned the Hamidian regime, reassured that the Revolution had been carried out "creditably", because of the army. Having been an influential figure in the Ottoman capital for years, Block decided to influence Said, the newly appointed Grand Vizier, to declare a general amnesty as proof of a genuine reform. Further, he suggested to Hardinge on 25 July that he inaugurate a new pro-Ottoman policy and support Said and Kiamil in their efforts to reform the country. He warned that if this did not happen the new movement might turn to the Germans. He trusted that England and France would not allow Bulgaria or any other country to impede the action of the

¹Fitzmaurice to Tyrrell, 25.8.08. Pte. BD.V. No.210, Ed.Add.

²Barclay to Grey, 21.7.08. tel.No.170. Minute by Oliphant.

³Same to Same 22.7.08. tel.No.171. Minute by Hardinge.

new Ottoman Government. Block claimed that the nomination of Said and Kiamil was not a sign of Anglophile policy, but of the Sultan's choice of two best men for office "in order to shelter himself behind them."¹

The first marked retreat from Britain's reform policy occurred on 27 July. In view of the "marked improvement" of the situation in Macedonia caused by the disappearance of the bands, the British Government decided to suspend representations at the Porte for the creation of a mobile force.² On the same day Britain congratulated Abdul-Hamid and Said on the establishment of a constitutional regime. Grey also made a cautious statement in Parliament on that very day. He admitted that the old reform policy had come to an end as a result of the "remarkable situation". At the same time he felt it necessary to defend his past policy, which was "truly humanitarian and disinterested", and "never political", refuting the charge that it was aimed at the derogation of the Sultan's authority. He explained the former British attitude as the result of treaty obligations towards certain parts of the Ottoman Empire. Nothing was easier now than to criticise more than ever the Hamidian regime: "We are well aware that while the Christian population has suffered from bad government, Mahomedans have suffered as well." The end of the old Turcophobe line and the inauguration of a new cautious but sympathetic line was officially announced by Grey in Parliament:

¹Block to Hardinge, 25.7.08. Pte. HP,11.

²Grey to O'Bierne, 27.7.08. tel.No. BD.op.cit. No.212.

"If Turkey is going to improve the whole government of the country and ensure that the Mahomedans and Christians shall benefit equally by the improvements, then it is better that the Macedonian question should be settled by the Turks taking in hand and doing what for years we have been urging them to do, than by pressing partial reforms on reluctant, unwilling and obstructing authorities... of course we must await events; but at the present time I can only say this: our own sympathy must be with those who are trying to introduce reforms, and I should be the last to prophesy that they will fail. If they succeed, then they must succeed by their own efforts, but our sympathy is with them... while not relaxing our watchfulness, while not becoming slack in our desire to do all in our power to promote improvement in Macedonia, we shall for the present preserve an expectant and sympathetic attitude."¹

Considering the reluctance and difficulty with which the success of the Revolution was accepted by Sir G. Barclay, the British Minister, Grey's statement was a real triumph.² The day after, Grey remained true to his Parliamentary statement while talking to the Bulgarian Agent, Stancioff. As the latter was denying the recent Ottoman revival, Grey argued that "any improvement in the Government in Turkey would be a great change for the better."³ He repeated the principle of "wait and see what happens", making it clear that the question was not to be settled by the "mere announcement of a Turkish Constitution, and we ought to judge by results."

Nevertheless, the fact was that the day after Grey's statement Hardinge revealed the extent of the embarrassment which still prevailed

¹ Hansard, House of Commons, 27.7.08. 4th series. vol.193. cols.966/9.

² Barclay to Hardinge. 28.7.08. Pte.HP,11.

³ Grey to Buchanan. 28.7.08. No.40 BD.V. No.213.

in the Foreign Office. "Events of the last few days have been so unexpected that it is impossible to say what will be our next step as regards the Macedonian reform projects."¹ Though there was no more need for it, the whole matter was still under consultation with Russia. On the other hand Hardinge expressed the hope that the Constitution, "backed by the Young Turk party", would result in the regeneration of the administration in Macedonia. He doubted if this hope might fit with the views of other and more interested Powers. He shelved also the policy towards the Balkan States because the bands sponsored by them had melted away.²

The old policy was only suspended and replaced by "an expectant attitude" until it could be proved whether the bands had disappeared entirely or not. "If only this Young Turk party can consolidate itself and introduce a really good administration into the country, they will have been playing our game entirely, but perhaps not the game of other more interested Powers."³ This was the real touchstone: a new policy could be introduced only on the condition that reforms should be carried out by the Constitutional movement. The Foreign Office hoped that they would be saved not only from the burden of reforms, but also that the Revolution had caused a blow to German influence in Constantinople.⁴

Thus, it was decided to suspend the scheme for the mobile force,

¹ Hardinge to Buchanan. 28.7.08. HP, 13.

² Ibid.

³ Hardinge to Goschen. 28.7.08. Pte. HP, 13.

⁴ Hardinge to de Salis, 28.7.08. Pte. Ibid.

to bring the activities of the gendarmerie to a minimum and to refuse to give any help to the officials of the old regime.¹

Perhaps no one expressed better the bewilderment which caught the British diplomats than Sir H. Lamb, the Consul-General at Salonica, who watched the striking fraternity of the hitherto divided population with a sceptical smile as to how long it would last.² Hardinge also admitted on that day that it was impossible to say how long this happy state of affairs would continue.³ He was more confident that the Constitution would prevail since it was backed by the Army. On 30 July he became even more confident as he wrote to Bertie that in the Foreign Office, they were "extremely" pleased regarding the recent development in Macedonia.⁴ He could see now the "nightmare" of the Macedonian reform vanishing for ever, and the Germans, so he hoped, would find it difficult to persuade the Ottoman Parliament to approve the kilometric guarantees. But he foresaw also the negative repercussions that the Revolution might produce in Egypt, India and the Balkan States. The graver danger was the Balkan one. The Bulgarian and the Serb representatives had already impressed upon the Foreign Office their opinion that the reform movement was illusory and nothing could be hoped from the "Turks". Hardinge now sounded very ominous indeed: "I fear that before long these Balkan States will try to stir up trouble, and to prevent any good coming from the recent peaceful revolution at

¹ Hardinge to Lamb. 28.7.08. Pte. Ibid.; Barclay to Grey. 28.7.08. tel.No.197. Minute by Hardinge.

² Lamb to Hardinge, 29.7.08. Pte. HP,11.

³ Cf.n.1.

⁴ Hardinge to Bertie. 30.7.08. Pte. BP,180.

Constantinople."

It was a matter of coincidence that Sir G. Lowther, the new Ambassador, arrived just at the beginning of the new era. Later on, he was accused of being responsible for the worsening relations between Britain and the Ottoman Empire. But, in fact, on his arrival, on 30 July, fear, doubt and anxiety was already considerable in the Foreign Office. Now, on his arrival he was accepted enthusiastically by the population as the representative of the most favoured Power at Constantinople. "How little we either of us foresaw, when you were appointed, the reception you would actually get !" Grey encouraged him.¹ Grey was not ready to promise much to the new regime, and was careful not to commit Britain in any way which could involve her in actual intervention. This was rather understandable since it was already said that Britain had decided upon an expectant attitude. "We should avoid making the Turks suspicious by attempting to take a hand where we are not wanted, but we should make them understand that, if they are really going to make a good job of their own affairs, our encouragement and support will be very firm, and that we shall deprecate any interference from outside on the part of others. I do not mean that we should go to the length of intervention to protect them, but that our diplomatic attitude will be benevolent, and our influence used to secure fair chance for them." At the same time Grey expressed the apprehensions that the British Government

¹Grey to Lowther, 31.7.08. Pte. BD.V. No.204. Ed.Add.

had with regard to Egypt and India. It is significant that Grey did not mention the possibility that European, Imperial or Moslem considerations might well clash with his promises "to help the better elements, to wait upon events, and give sympathy and encouragement when required to the reform movement."

While both Grey and Hardinge wrote with guarded hope to Lowther and Bertie, the letter which Hardinge sent to Block was considerably less apprehensive and the promise for British sympathy was more emphatic. "Whatever we can do to help and encourage the Turks in their present attempt at the regeneration of the Turkish administration will most certainly be done by us. We are very anxious to make use of this opportunity to improve our relations with the Turks, and to show them that it has not been a policy of hostility to Turkey in general that we have followed during the last few years, but a policy that has been imposed upon us by maladministration in those countries with which we are connected by Treaty obligations. You may be quite sure that no external diversion on the part of Bulgaria or any other Balkan Power would be tolerated for one instant. I am quite convinced that the Russians, French and ourselves would do all we could to prevent such a development."¹ The salvation which the Revolution brought with it by solving the Macedonian problem was viewed by the Foreign Office as a considerable asset, although new difficulties were anticipated in Egypt and India. In fact these problems which might occur in Egypt and India and

¹Hardinge to Block, 31.7.08. Pte. HP,13.

force Britain to give some constitutional institutions to the local population, could be "facilitated considerably" by gaining the sympathies of the "new elements".

Nevertheless, the definite instruction which Grey conveyed to Lowther said that the Foreign Secretary's statement of 27 July, made in Parliament and reported by The Times, might serve as a text for explaining the British attitude. "It is important that our attitude and views should become as clearly and widely known as possible."¹

This, of course, did not alleviate the fears and doubts as to the future of the new regime. Thus, the Sultan's declaration that he would rule constitutionally was accepted with scepticism in the Foreign Office. He was still suspected of relying on Germany's moral and material support.² But this was just one opinion in the Foreign Office. Another view, expressed a fortnight after the declaration of the Constitution regarded the moment as still "a most unlooked for opportunity for us and we must continue to show where our sympathies are and make every endeavour to maintain our position." But was Germany really the coming obstacle to better relations between Britain and the new regime? Or did everything depend on Britain alone? Neither of these were the real issues of the moment. It seemed that Grey described the real dilemma for Britain. "The delicate point will presently be Russia - we

¹ Grey to Lowther, 31.7.08. Pte. tel.FO/371/544/26664.

² Lowther to Grey, 7.8.08. tel.No.218. Minutes.

cannot revert to the old policy of Lord Beaconsfield; we have now to be pro-Turkish without giving rise to any suspicion that we are anti-Russian."¹

Lowther, for his part, was also five days after his arrival, quite soon criticising the Young Turks: "It seems too much to believe that they will, for long, be able to live up to their motto of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity"; and added that they lacked responsible leaders."²

Meanwhile, the Foreign Office was careful not to intervene in the affairs of the new regime. Lowther was instructed not to discourage the Grand Vizier as to the acceptance of a French financial adviser, even if the adviser was unnecessary. "The less the Powers become involved with Turkey at the present moment, the better it will be for everyone."³ The new regime was already identified with the Young Turks, although Kiamil was the Grand Vizier. Grey himself detected quite early the true character of the Young Turks and the new regime. "The new Turkish Government are not likely to be in a hurry to put themselves in the hand of any foreign Power. There is nationalist feeling in the new movement in Turkey which would resent this."⁴

Indeed, the tendency in the Foreign Office was to leave the

¹Ibid.

²Lowther to Grey, 4.8.08. Pte. BD.V. No.205. Ed.Add.

³Lowther to Grey. 9.8.08. tel.No.221. Minutes.

⁴Same to Same 9.8.08. tel.No.222. Minute.

new regime entirely as master of its own fate, and to avoid the traditional interference in Ottoman affairs. Both the Foreign Office and the Embassy thought that there was no necessity to despatch any warship to the Dardanelles.¹ But, again, all was conditional on the ability of the new rulers to reform their Empire.²

On the other hand the Foreign Office did not demand from the new rulers the suppression of the predominant German influence as a condition for a British change of policy.³ Both in the Foreign Office and the Embassy there was confidence that the Revolution itself had been a blow to Germany since the latter identified herself with the Sultan.⁴ Thus, the Foreign Office was convinced that if General von der Goltz was again invited to reorganize the Ottoman army, it would entail considerable German influence. Nevertheless, the British did not even think of intervention, although they were convinced that any attempt to re-introduce German influence should be deprecated; "but it is difficult to see how to thwart the scheme, if the Turks are bent upon it." This possibility, of Goltz' return to Constantinople, brought to the Foreign Office the thought that the re-organization of the Ottoman navy "ought to benefit us", and that also financial experts might be Englishmen. Here Lowther's opinion was accepted

¹ F.O. to Admiralty. 10.8.08. Immediate and Confidential. FO/371/545/27649

² Oliphant minuted on a hostile article in an Austrian paper: "The Reichspost in its display of Schadenfreude shows its inability to appreciate the real intentions of HMG. If Turkey reforms itself we have no reason for regret." Carnegie to Grey, 5.8.08.No.104.Minute. 11.8.08.

³ M. Heymann, The Turkish Question ... p.68.

⁴ Lowther to Grey, 19.8.08. tel.No.231. Minutes.

that it was too early to expect the new regime to import foreign advisers.¹

The beginning of Kiamil's administration (from 6 August), did not inspire the Foreign Office with more confidence as to the future prospects of the new regime. On the contrary, Grey wrote to Lowther that the future was full of dangers, although what had happened already was "marvellous": "the habit of vicious and corrupt government will again produce violence and disorder. Or out of the present upheaval there may be evolved a strong and efficient military despotism." He seemed to be ready to encourage the "good influences"; but warned that this must be done carefully in order not to raise the suspicion of Russia that "we are reverting to the old policy of supporting Turkey as a barrier against her and should continue to show willingness to work with Russia when possible."² As a matter of fact, Russia did not yet constitute any danger to the new turn in British policy, as Izvolsky expressed his willingness to work "in full accord" with Britain.³ But the apprehensions as to Russia's Pan-Slavic intentions, were alive at the Porte. No change occurred in Ottoman policy towards Russia, who was considered by Kiamil as a "natural enemy" as much as England was regarded as a "natural friend."⁴ Lowther was told

¹Ibid.

²Grey to Lowther, 11.8.08. Pte. BD.V. No.207. Ed.Add.

³Nicolson to Grey, 13.8.08. No.360. Conf., Ibid., No.215.

⁴Lowther to Grey, 11.8.08. Pte. Ibid., 206 Ed.Add.

of this extreme line by the new Grand Vizier, Kiamil, on 10 August. The Grand Vizier obviously knew that it would be quite hard for Britain to reconcile her friendship with Russia and her more recent sympathetic attitude to the new Ottoman regime. Therefore Kiamil had an "earnest hope" that Britain would support Russian policy towards the Ottoman Empire only in co-operation with the other Powers. He dreaded a Russian-made large Slav Kingdom which might threaten the Ottoman Empire. Lowther replied that this could be avoided by applying the "necessary reforms internally". No doubt, Lowther reflected the policy of his Government, but this was only suggesting an administrative reply to aggressive nationalism. The British Ambassador observed that reform should be started by reforming the department of Justice and the Police, and expressed concern for the future of the Sultan vis-à-vis the Young Turks.

It was finally Nicolson, the British Ambassador in St. Petersburg, who queried the readiness of the Young Turks to give the Christians a fair share in the Government. Izvolsky, for his part, replied that the threat of European intervention would perhaps be a good guarantee against any misconduct towards the Christians.¹ At that time Izvolsky was already engaged in his double game of acquiring free passage through the Dardanelles, whilst consenting to the annexation of Bosnia by Austria.²

¹ Nicolson to Grey, 13.8.08. No. 560. conf. op.cit.

² Cf. Albertini, The Origins ... I, p.195.

About that time, on 12 August, Aehrenthal declared that his Government's policy would be in favour of non-intervention and the preservation of the integrity of the Ottoman Empire.¹ Thus, Britain was assured by the two most interested Powers in the area that the new regime would be able to devote itself to internal reform without being disturbed by external interference. On that occasion, however, Aehrenthal had drawn Hardinge's attention to the similar dilemma which faced both Austria in Bosnia and Britain in Egypt. No doubt Britain thought she might face the Egyptian problem as a result of the Revolution, but to a considerably lesser degree than Austria. Grey thought that the success of the Revolution would have a "great effect" on the Constitutional development of Egypt.² Gorst argued that under the existing Firmans, Egypt enjoyed complete administrative autonomy. Nevertheless, he was sensitive to the position and status of Ghazi Moukhtar Pasha, the Ottoman High Commissioner, and to the Sultan's right of veto on Egyptian loans.³ Cromer, from his retirement, advised the Government to exert any influence "not so much in the direction of pushing on reforms as in that of tempering the zeal of the reformers."⁴ Grey, while accepting this advice, commented that the British Government should not give the impression of being lukewarm in her "desire to encourage reforms."

Aehrenthal's analogy between Bosnia and Egypt was a gross

¹Ext. memo. by Hardinge, 16.8.08, BD.V. App.IV.

²Grey to Lowther, 11.8.08. Pte. Ibid., No.214.

³Note on Egypt and Turkey by Sir E. Gorst, 19.8.08. (28881) in: Same to Same 20.8.08. Pte. LP.

⁴Ext. letter by Cromer, 15.8.08. Ibid.

mistake. Grey approved Lowther's decision not to raise the question of appointing a successor to Moukhtar in his conversation with Kiamil and Tewfik. The reason was that, contrary to former apprehensions, "the Young Turks have been so friendly about Egypt that it is undesirable to say anything which might make them sensitive." The whole matter was left to Lowther's discretion as it was not considered to be of more than secondary importance.

As foreign intervention against the new regime seemed to be remote, in spite of the somewhat disquieting reports from Sophia,¹ the Foreign Office continued to develop its attitude towards the more immediate and urgent question of the reform administration. The Young Turks, although not nominally in power, were regarded by the Foreign Office as the de facto government. Grey regretted that he was unable to see Ahmed Riza, as one of the "principal organizers" of the Movement who could set forth its views which might be "interesting and helpful." Grey meanwhile felt he ought to state again his policy towards the Young Turks. This in essence was not new. Now, he added, that the Young Turks should not try to go too fast, but should place the Government in the hands of "honest and capable" men. The consolidation of finance seemed the second most important point after the administrative one. The chief motive in Grey's policy had remained the same since he had first stated it in Parliament: "Just as we used all our influence, when Turkish Gov' was bad, to press reforms from

¹e.g. Buchanan to Grey, 19.8.08. No.72. BD.V. No.263.

outside, so now if reforms are being developed from inside we shall use all our influence to prevent their being interfered with from outside." As side effect of the consolidation of the new regime Grey hoped that British capital should be given more opportunities without demanding onerous conditions. The Smyrna-Aidin railway was set forward by Grey as an example for a fair British enterprise, because it did not involve any kilometric guarantees. This should better be done in co-operation with the French, as the British alone had no prospect.¹

When the Ottoman Council of Ministers decided to ask the British Government to lend an Admiral for the reorganization of the Ottoman navy, it was regarded in the Foreign Office as a "gain", especially as it was decided not to approach any foreign government for a military expert to reorganize the army. On the other hand much astonishment was expressed in the Foreign Office when the new regime decided upon a French expert to rearrange their finances.² The French Ambassador was considered, together with the Rouvier group, as the main obstacle for British interests. "The appointment of a French financial adviser may mean the perpetuation of the present unsatisfactory state of things," minuted Mallet.³ Lowther was struck by the fact that Britain played a "second fiddle" to the French in what he called "the 'exploitation' of this country." Particularly, Lowther complained, as the Revolution did not bring any change in the "sorry role" Britain played in the Ottoman Bank.⁴

¹Grey to Lowther, 23.8.08. Pte. Ibid. No.208. Ed.Add.

²Lowther to Grey, 21.8.07. tel. No.235. Minutes. FO/371/545.

³Ibid., Minute by Mallet.

⁴Lowther to Mallet, 13.8.08. Pte. LP.

A month after the Revolution Lowther's criticism was harsh and the growing scepticism which coloured his official reports was greater in his private letters, where he patronizingly referred to the Young Turks as "a collection of good-intentioned children". He foresaw the fall of Kiamil after the meeting of Parliament, as the Young Turks were about to assume official power. Lowther claimed that for the meantime the moderates prevailed in the CUP, and therefore there was no danger of violent acts. He was less optimistic over the attitude of Bulgaria and Greece and their co-religionists inside the Ottoman Empire. Only the Armenians were considered by him as true supporters of the new regime. But he did not expect the Young Turks to start playing the dangerous game of nationalism, though he did not believe in their radical and liberal statements from the very beginning. "Just now the Committee are very anxious to obtain the applause of Europe and are constantly asking advice .."¹ The growing feelings against the Sultan and the reaction of the strict Moslems that matters were going too fast, were another source for anxiety to the critical British Ambassador. The Young Turks were far too much engaged in bullying the Sultan, as the Khedive thought. Against this background one should see his lack of enthusiasm for financial and naval advisers.²

On Cromer's advice and with Grey's approval, Lowther tried to temper the zeal of the Young Turk reformers but was unsuccessful. The reason was that the latter were "frightfully anxious" to bring

¹ Lowther to Grey. 25.8.08. Pte. BD.V. No.209. Ed.Add. Ryan, The Last of the Dragomans (London, 1951) pp.70/1.

² Ibid., GP, 79.

to Parliament evidence of their work. The Sultan still faced a "considerable danger" to his personal position. As to the reform itself Lowther did not expect corruption to disappear entirely, but was hopeful as to the "whole-scale" robbery.¹

In the Embassy at Constantinople there was also another person who made himself heard at the Foreign Office. This was the celebrated Chief Dragoman G.H. Fitzmaurice. The affinity of ideas between the newly arrived Ambassador and his knowledgeable Chief Dragoman, was clear from the very beginning. Nevertheless, Fitzmaurice had a better opinion of the Young Turks than Lowther. "They have many of the requisites of successful national leaders - are impersonal and have a great sense of responsibility."² As far as the future was concerned Fitzmaurice also pointed to the internal and external difficulties ahead of the new regime. Amongst the former the most acute was the economic one. Second in importance was the question of how to carry out the principle of equality in terms of practical politics. The danger was that the Christians, being more able and competent, would prosper, while the Moslems would now become the malcontents. This might produce "a desperate internal struggle accompanied by disorders", which might bring about Russian intervention. Fitzmaurice warned that the solidification of the new regime would certainly bring about "highly pronounced nationalist if not chauvinistic tendencies." The Young Turks, he confidently predicted, would raise up the questions of Crete, Egypt, Macedonia, Bosnia, Aden, Lebanon, Cyprus, the special position of the

¹Lowther to Grey. 31.8.08. Pte.LP.

²Fitzmaurice to Tyrrell. 25.8.08. Pte. BD.V. No.210. Ed.Add.

British Residency at Baghdad and the "irregular" status of Lynch Navigation Company in Mesopotamia. Fitzmaurice, like Lowther, was of the opinion that the pretentious imitation of the French Revolution in putting into action the ideas of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity was unsuitable to the "Turkish character".

Nonetheless, Fitzmaurice, though full of anxieties as to the success of the Revolution,¹ thought that this moment, when Britain was the most favoured nation at Constantinople, was a golden opportunity for checking the progress of the German sponsored Baghdad Railway and establishing British economic control over Mesopotamia. Willcocks' scheme for the irrigation of Mesopotamia seemed to Fitzmaurice the best way to fulfil this policy and to get the British businessmen out of the cold.² Lowther also argued that it was "very essential" that British commercial enterprise ought to take interest in the Mesopotamian scheme of irrigation which involved a sum of "about ten millions".³

In the meantime, British policy remained unchanged, namely, maintaining their sympathy as long as the new regime followed a policy of reform. This conditional line was revealed and consolidated itself when Britain decided to keep the gendarmerie officers in Macedonia in their posts. "It would, I consider, be unfortunate if the British officers were withdrawn from Macedonia before the pacification of that region is complete and the new regime is firmly

¹ Bertie supplied the FO with an interesting conversation which he had had with Munir Pesha, a former Ottoman Ambassador to Paris, on the doubtful success of the CUP. Bertie to Grey, 21.8.08 Pte.BP,180.

² Ibid.

³ Lowther to Grey. 31.8.08. Pte.LP.

established there."¹ The British were ready to withdraw their officers only if the other Powers would do so and if the Porte desired it. This could not obviously be stated to the new regime as it could be interpreted as an unfriendly attitude. Thus, the Ottoman Charge d'Affaires had been told by Mallet that the officers had better stay, because their precipitate removal might be "inconvenient to the Turkish Gov' and excite nervousness in official circles at Sofia." To this Mallet added that the Porte should not be "uneasy" any more with regard to Russian hostility as the latter's ambition "no longer lay in the direction of Constantinople." A short time earlier Lowther and Fitzmaurice had warned against the possible revival of the Russian threat and Grey had admitted that this should make British policy towards the new regime even more careful. Russia was inevitably a more important factor than the new regime.²

The primary need to avoid any clash with Russia on any problem connected with the Ottoman Empire, was part and parcel of British policy from the outset.³ This Anglo-Russian accord manifested itself not only in Russia's acceptance of Britain's "wait and see" policy in Macedonia, but also by British acceptance of the Russian line on the Ottoman-Persian frontier.

¹Grey to Lowther. 31.8.08. No.364, Ibid., No.201.Ed.Add.

²M.B. Cooper, "British Policy in the Balkans 1908-9". Historical Journal, (1964) pp.258-79, has referred to a contradiction in British policy.

³Cf. Grey's minute 7.8. op.cit. p.16n.5 and p.18n.1. See also the refs. to Russian policy in Lowther's & Fitzmaurice's Pte letters 25.8.op.cit.

I could not refuse the Russian request to say something about the Turco-Persian frontier. The last news was so unsatisfactory and the Turks are so flagrantly in the wrong, that if I had refused, the Russians would have had ground for thinking that we meant to throw them over and to sacrifice Persia, if need be, in order to please the Turks.¹

Of the more immediate questions to be tackled, that of a loan to the new regime figured quite early. Lowther advised that they precipitate the issue of the loan to the Porte, otherwise it might apply elsewhere.² The Foreign Office supposed that the constitutional cause in the Ottoman Empire might suffer if money was not forthcoming. At about that time they gave in to the idea that the financial adviser might not be British but French.³ But it was regarded as reasonable that the adviser for the Ottoman Customs should be expected to be British. The Porte asked the British to lend them the services of Chitty Bey from the Egyptian Administration to reorganize their Customs. The Foreign Office was very keen that Chitty should proceed to Constantinople, because the old struggle continued amongst the Powers: "It is of great importance to do what we can at the present moment to further British interests at Constantinople."⁴

In Constantinople itself Lowther established, through Fitzmaurice, his first contacts with the Young Turks. On 2 September

¹Grey to Lowther. 20.8.08. Pte. op.cit.

²Lowther to Grey. 6.9.08. No.249.

³Grey to Bertie. 7.9.08. tel.No. 138.

⁴Mallet to Corst. 10.9.08. FO/371/549/31240.

he received Talaat and Dr. Bahaeddin Shakir, the secretaries of the internal and external branches of the CUP. Lowther was impressed with their moderate ideas, and their realistic attitude as to future difficulties. They again professed their English orientation, and looked to the British Government for "approval and sympathy."¹ Lowther impressed upon them the importance of keeping Abdul-Hamid in his present position.² The representatives of the CUP denied the allegations that they intended to dethrone the Sultan, whose ability and statesmanship they highly esteemed. They believed in true co-operation with the different Christian elements in the Empire, and claimed to have "great confidence" in Kiamil's Government. While Lowther realized that the Young Turks were drawing a "very bright" picture of the future of internal affairs in the Empire, he observed that foreign affairs would be the real test for the new regime. Talaat and Shakir expressed some fears regarding the possible action of their neighbours, especially Bulgaria. Lowther was careful not to exceed his instructions: "It was to be anticipated that if matters went smoothly under the new order of things, British money would seek investment in the country; and that the British Government and this Embassy would encourage only sound and reliable people." The Foreign Office approved, as Hardinge had suggested, Lowther's attitude towards the CUP. Grey alone forwarded a warning here: "We need not lay too much stress upon deference to the present

¹Lowther to Grey. 2.9.08. conf. No.541. Fitzmaurice to Tyrrell, 14.5.10. Pte. GP.

²See the similarity of views here between Lowther and Fitzmaurice. Fitzmaurice to Tyrrell. 25.8.08. Pte. op.cit.

Sultan."¹

In the meantime, the British policy of expectancy and sympathy was put to the test. Another line was gradually emerging as the Government was worried about the danger to British economic interests. Lowther tempered the expectations raised by Fitzmaurice a few days before, reminding Grey of the national character of the Constitutional movement "with a consequent tendency to restrict the privileged position of foreigners."² Lynch's steamers might be regarded as an infringement of Ottoman sovereign rights. In view of a possible contradiction between political sympathy and economic interests, Lowther hoped that the reforms which were being gradually taken in hand, might obviate the need to make representations at Constantinople in favour of British economic interests. His urging the Foreign Office to hasten a loan for the new regime, was more than a bona fide demonstration of goodwill, as there was a danger that the new regime might be driven into the arms of German financiers.³

Lowther claimed also that the Revolution caused the downfall of Pan-Islamism, as after all Abdul-Hamid's claim to the Caliphate was "shadowy" and was based on "purely political pretensions."⁴ He was confident that the position of a so-called

¹ Lowther to Grey. 2.9.08. op.cit. Minutes. 14.9.

² Same to Same, 6.9.08. No.

³ Same to Same, 7.9.08. No.552. Mallet applied to Rothschild for a loan on 11.9. FO/371/549/

⁴ Same to Same, 14.9.08. No.567. Lowther mentioned also Sir C. Eliot's view as evidence. (Sir C. Eliot, Turkey in Europe (London, 2nd ed.1908)).

"Vice Regent of God upon earth" for all the Moslems would now "necessarily" have to be terminated. Nevertheless, Abdul-Hamid as Sultan was still as powerful rallying point as ever for his non-Moslem subjects. Lowther found it only "obviously natural" that Dr. Shakir and Talaat did not make any reference to the Sultan's spiritual position. This only fitted in with the recent Fetva issued by the Sheikh-ul-Islam, that all religions were equal before the law. Lowther considered it as one of the difficult tasks of "Young Turkey" to reconcile Moslem pre-eminence with constitutional government.

But as it was predicted before, external problems were to be more crucial than internal ones, as was shown by the Guéshoff incident. The Bulgarian Agent at Constantinople did not receive an invitation to the banquet which was given by the Ottoman Minister for Foreign Affairs to the diplomatic representatives. This was justified on the ground that Bulgaria was not independent but part of the Ottoman Empire. The Foreign Office itself admitted that this was the case but the Bulgarian Government decided to recall M. Guéshoff, and it was soon realized in the Foreign Office that there was indeed an imminent danger that Bulgaria might now raise the question of her independence. Nevertheless, according to Tilley: "To the Turks Prince Ferdinand is merely Ferdinand Pasha", and he could dismiss the matter by recalling that Guéshoff had made a similar difficulty at the funeral of Sir W. O'Connor.¹ Hardinge

¹ Lowther to Grey. 12.9.08. No.258. Minutes.

considered the CUP as responsible for what he regarded as a small matter and as "somewhat foolish" on their part, because the Bulgarian Agent should have been invited in as a "Turkish or quasi-Turkish official."¹ On the other hand there was a feeling in the Foreign Office that the Young Turk Revolution "must have a decided anti-Bulgarian aspect; it has come in time; the Turks doubtless think - to save them from the Bulgarian peril ... Hitherto both sides have been restrained very much by the personal fears of their sovereigns; now both sovereigns have greatly lost in authority." It was suggested inside the Foreign Office that the old warning as to "alienation of sympathy" would hardly be helpful in Sophia, but it might be used at the Porte "pro-forma" and in a friendly way.² But the final attitude was more favourable to the Porte than was suggested. Hardinge made it clear that since the Powers had not made any request for Bulgaria's independence or for administrative autonomy in Macedonia, the mere invitation for a dinner could hardly be a pretext for it. Wishing to interfere neither in Ottoman nor in Bulgarian affairs, the British diplomatic representatives in Constantinople and Sophia were instructed to impress upon the two Governments that a compromise was very desirable.³ But it was a different question as to whether any compromise between aggressive Bulgarian nationalism and the new regime was possible. The Bulgarian Minister for Foreign Affairs made it clear that it was not, in view of Austria's contemplated annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the coming convocation of the Ottoman

¹Lowther to Grey. 13.9.08. No.259. Minute.

²Buchanan to Grey. 14.9.08. No.17. Minute by Tilley.

³Ibid., minute by Hardinge. Same to Same 18.9.08. No.18. Minute by Hardinge. Grey to Lowther. 21.9.08. tel. No.237. FO/371/550.

Parliament. He emphasized that this might involve a Bulgarian declaration of independence.¹ Kiamil Pasha, the Grand Vizier, was ready to submit the question of Bulgaria's status to the arbitration of the Powers but the response of the Foreign Office was negative. "We had much better avoid any such arbitration by the Powers; we do not know to what we might be committed ..."² The Turks appear to anticipate that the Powers will support them but if they attempt to recover hold over Bulgaria we should hardly be right in assisting them."³ The alarming despatch sent on 16 September was also accepted in the Foreign Office with a touch of pessimism. Hardinge argued that independence would not be entirely a gain for Bulgaria, since at present she enjoyed certain commercial advantages as a vassal state.⁴

Soon it was understood in the Foreign Office that the matter was no longer the Guéshoff incident but the much more dangerous question of the complete independence of Bulgaria from Ottoman rule. The dilemma which faced the British Government in view of her sympathetic attitude to the new regime was about to be solved. The Foreign Office made it quite clear that the pro-Ottoman declarations which had been made in the immediate aftermath of the Revolution, had in fact not meant to commit her in any sense whatever: "While we are anxious to see Turkey reform and to show our sympathy with her we cannot wish to see her recover ground in Europe." Although, according to Hardinge, it was

¹ Buchanan to Grey. 16.9.08. No.75. BD.V. No.266.

² Lowther to Grey. 20.9.08. No.265. Minute by Tilley.

³ Same to Same 15.9.08. No.573. Minute by Tilley.

⁴ Minutes by Tilley and Hardinge. FO/371/550.

obvious that "the maintenance of the status quo is greatly to be desired, since any modification will probably entail the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina by Austria (who seems to be encouraging Bulgaria) and this would be likely to entail a demand for compensation by Italy and possibly other developments."¹

While clouds started to gather around the European frontier of the Ottoman Empire, the internal prospects were hardly promising at least as far as Lowther was concerned. He pointed out the impatience of the Young Turks and their increasing suspicion of Abdul-Hamid. The CUP, "that mysterious creature", were together with the Army in control of the country. This situation led Lowther to the opinion that this might end in a military dictatorship. Another internal danger which the Ambassador predicted was a rift between the different Christian communities, although this was not a difficulty which the CUP could not tackle, according to the declarations of that body.² Lowther doubted, as he had done continuously since his arrival, the possibility of reconciling Moslem predominance with Constitutional Government.³ Tilley in London, who had only recently served in the Embassy at Constantinople, and was an old and staunch anti-Ottoman, had found some support in Lowther's views. But Tilley went much further and advocated the idea of replacing the Ottoman Empire with the nation-state system, though admitting that it was still premature: "Moslem predominance and much less Ottoman predominance, seems almost impossible, but it is to be hoped that any

¹ Same to Same 17.9.08. No.585. Minute by Tilley.

² Lowther to Grey. 14.9.08. Pte. LP.

³ Same to Same 14.9.08. No.567. FO/371/559.

rate before Greek or Arab predominance is realized those nations will be more worthy of it."¹ The British Government was also encouraged towards a most pessimistic view of the Young Turk Revolution by Professor Vambery. By 11 September he predicted that -

"The Young Turks may give the most alluring promise, they may exhibit the common danger from outside and show the greatest toleration, they will never succeed in blending the various elements into one body politic: an effort which has not yet succeeded even in civilized Austria - Hungary, in spite of more favourable conditions."²

Britain was not doing much better in the economic sphere. The Foreign Office was trying to follow Lowther's and Block's advice to raise a loan for the new regime. But on 21 September Hardinge admitted that he had failed in his efforts to persuade Rothschild's and Baring's to take up part of the loan as they declined to compete with the Ottoman Bank. But the chief reason was the strong suspicion that existed in the City regarding Ottoman finance.³

Hardinge's reluctance to work against the Director of the Ottoman Bank also resulted from the friction it might create with France. Rothschild's and Baring's promised that if the situation in the Ottoman Empire was to be consolidated there would be no difficulty in obtaining money in the London market. Hardinge was not discouraged: "In spite of our failure at the present moment, we intend to persist and to do all we can to improve our financial position in Turkey."⁴

¹ Ibid. Minute. See also: J.A.C. Tilley, London to Tokyo (London, 1942) p.55

² Vambery to Grey, 11.9.08. Pte. Minute by Asquith "most interesting and the memo is admirable". 21.9. VP, 33.

³ Hardinge to Lowther. 21.9.08. Pte. HP, 13.

⁴ Hardinge to Block. 21.9.08. Pte. HP, 13.

Hardinge felt that the new regime would be consolidated as soon as the Ottoman Parliament met. As a result money would be available in the City for what Hardinge called "bona fide enterprises" in the Ottoman Empire. "I daresay," Hardinge predicted, "that a year will make a considerable change in this respect."

In fact, the Willcocks' scheme for the irrigation of Mesopotamia was the chief economic concern of the British Government. Fitzmaurice had already understood its importance one month previously, when he had hurried to discuss it with the Ottoman Minister for Public Works.¹ The Foreign Office was anxious lest Willcocks', who "forgets his patriotism when his personal interests are concerned", would damage British interests, and Lowther was called upon to press Willcocks to employ British engineers. Lowther himself regarded him as a "dreamer" and promised that the British Resident and Consul-General at Baghdad would keep an eye on him.² Messrs. Pearson were keen to do the job, supported by the Foreign Office, and Barings assured Hardinge that "any amount of money would be available in this country for a concession of that kind." Block was also asked to do what he could to help to obtain the irrigation concession.

In spite of the doubts and the hesitations as to the future of the new regime, the Foreign Office hoped that the Sultan would not be removed from office by the Young Turks. "I feel convinced that it would be a great mistake to get rid of him," Hardinge wrote privately, "as it would entail revolution and all sorts of difficulties that might

¹ Fitzmaurice to Tyrrell. 25.8.08. Pte. op.cit.

² Hardinge to Lowther. 21.9.08. Pte. LP. Lowther to Hardinge. 21.9.08. Pte. Ibid. Hardinge to Lowther. 20.10.08. Pte. Ibid.

crop up with it. It would be far more sensible to utilize him as a convenient figurehead."¹ At this time there was still a strong hope in the Foreign Office that the new regime would take "seriously" in hand the question of the Baghdad Railway by cancelling the German concession or by coming to a new agreement which would not entail any kilometric guarantees. Lowther was instructed to take every opportunity to point out to the Porte, in a discreet manner, that it now avoid using the system of kilometric guarantees which gave complete control to the Germans.² But it would be an exaggeration to say that this desire was to be the main object of British policy.³

A more important object was to maintain the status quo between the Ottoman Empire and Bulgaria. The crucial point was that as long as the Russian attitude did not entail any support to Bulgarian national aspirations, the balance between Britain's Russian and Ottoman policies could be maintained. The Guéshoff incident showed what a dangerous situation might occur if this balance were upset. The Foreign Office, however, now saw the danger as potential rather than imminent. Tcharykov, Russian Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs, stated that Russia would not support Bulgaria if she pushed matters to extremes. He accepted the British approach that the Berlin treaty (1878) should not be altered, but suggested that the Porte should be informed that Macedonia might again be a source of trouble if the tension with Bulgaria should continue.⁴

¹Hardinge to Block. 21.9.08. Pte. HP,13.

²Hardinge to Lowther. 21.9.08. Pte. LP.

³Cooper, op.cit., p.264.

⁴Nicolson to Grey. 23.9.08. tel.No.174.

But if the Guéshoff incident could be a foolish mistake, the Foreign Office could see the Bulgarian occupation of the Ottoman Oriental Railway as a clear case of deliberate provocation. The Ottoman Minister for Foreign Affairs asked that the British Government make its voice heard at Sofia.¹ Grey thought that the Porte ought to be supported, since they were conciliatory over the Guéshoff affair, but on condition that Russia agreed.²

So long as there was no external threat to the new regime, Britain felt confirmed in the success of her policy at Constantinople. This success was measured by the number of positions gained there for British officials. "Everything appears to be progressing satisfactorily at Constantinople. The Turkish Government have applied officially for a British Admiral to reorganise their fleet, for Mr. Chitty* to reorganise the Customs and have appointed Sir W. Willcocks as Adviser on Irrigation and such questions."³ Of these three achievements, the appointment of Willcocks was considered by the Foreign Office as of "really very great importance, for we hope that it may be the means of introducing British capital and British engineering works, into Mesopotamia."⁴

However, Nicolson was to warn London of an impending crisis. He claimed that Russian policy towards the Ottoman Empire had been changed by the visit of Prince Ferdinand to Budapest (23.9 - 25.9). The

¹Lowther to Grey. 25.9.08. tel. No.273. BD.V. No.267.

²Ibid., minute by Grey.

³Hardinge to the King. 18.9.08. Pte. HP,14.

⁴Hardinge to Graham. 25.9.08. Pte. Ibid. 13.

*A few days later Gorst reported that Chitty could not be spared from Egypt. Memo. by Gorst in: Grey to Lowther. 26.9.08. Pte.GP,79.

Austro-Russian struggle for Bulgaria resulted in an anti-Ottoman turn, and traditional animosities came to the surface again. The new situation in Constantinople ended the hope that Ottoman rule in Europe would soon come to an end, and added a new apprehension that the liberal tendencies of the new regime might lead to a movement among Russian Moslem races. Nicolson warned that the Russian Government would view modifications in the Berlin Treaty "with comparative equanimity": "I think she would be glad to see pending questions settled in favour of Bulgaria rather than of Turkey."¹ Hardinge had anticipated such a Russian attitude only in connection with the recent incidents. The imminent danger of a Bulgarian declaration of independence was not grasped at the Foreign Office.² "We want to act as much as possible in co-operation with Russia, especially as we feel that the Bulgarians are being egged on in their aggressive intentions by the Austrians ... Although the situation is not at present critical in any way, still it may easily become so, and I think we must be very wary in the manner in which we approach the Bulgarians, so as to give them no pretext for going to war or for declaring their independence."³ The new regime at Constantinople, not to mention the Ottoman Empire per se, was not taken into account. Hardinge was much more revealing in his private letter to an uninvolved diplomat: "If Bulgaria, proclaims her independence, we may have every sort of complication in the Balkans, and it may upset the new regime in Turkey. We are doing our utmost to smooth matters over, as it is our great desire to safeguard

¹ Nicolson to Grey. 29.9.08. tel.No.180. BD.V. No.271.

² Minutes in FO/371/550.

³ Hardinge to Nicolson. 30.9.08. Pte. BD.V.274.

Turkey from all external disturbances during the period which is necessary for her regeneration. Unfortunately Bulgaria is now at the zenith of her power, while Turkey, thanks to a long period of maladministration, is weaker than she has ever been before."¹

There was perhaps goodwill towards the new regime at Constantinople, but Britain had totally committed herself to Russia just a few days after she had made her pro-Revolutionary statements.

Reporting from Constantinople, Lowther sounded somewhat more optimistic than his chiefs in London. Nevertheless he was critical of Kiamil who was relying, possibly too much, on the intervention of the Powers to solve the Bulgarian problem, and was consequently "quite extraordinarily calm and unruffled." Lowther was further convinced that the Ottoman Empire could not fight Bulgaria, because the Hamidian regime left the Army in a "pitiable condition". Amongst their colleagues, Lowther and Marschall alone retained some optimism: "I see no reason to be so pessimistic. There are sure to be troubles. Turkey has never been without them, but the majority of the men in the movement are so earnest and as far as I know honest that they certainly should be rewarded. Some are impatient and this may bring about the fall of Kiamil."² Fitzmaurice, sceptical as ever, thought that "only a miracle. can carry Turkey through the legions of difficulties to ultimate successful consolidation on the present lines." He favoured British help and guidance for the new regime as it contributed some needed stabilization to Kiamil's Cabinet. Once the old British reform policy ceased, Fitzmaurice recommended that the Foreign Office extend and strengthen

¹Hardinge to Villiers (Lisbon). 30.9.08. Pte. HP,13.

²Lowther to Grey. 30.9.08. Pte. LP.

British economic interests. It was Fitzmaurice who suggested Chitty's name to the new regime, not merely because he wished to help the regeneration of the Ottoman Empire, but also because he thought this might be advantageous to British trade. Moreover, he could not resist the thought that if it were not for the Entente Cordiale "one could have got the Turks to accept Cromer or Milner to reorganise their finances."¹

Events were moving very fast for the new regime, faster than the British diplomats were prepared for. Neither Balkan nationalists nor Austrian statesmen were prepared to tolerate the success of the new regime. Still, so long as these were rumours and not translated into action, Britain believed that the Bosnian and Bulgarian problems could be smoothed over. This became a serious matter when the Ottoman diplomatic representative had to be told about it. On 28 September he was told at the Foreign Office that the British Government was "anxious to do everything in their power to save Turkey from being disturbed during the carrying out of the projected reforms."² But the Ottomans were also suspected of warlike intention, and were told that the Bulgarians were at the height of their power.³ On the same day the Bulgarian agent was told that if his country attempted to hamper the new regime at Constantinople she would "not only forfeit the sympathy of the British Government, but estrange English public opinion."⁴ Kiamil Pasha told Lowther that his Government would not give her consent

¹Fitzmaurice to Tyrrell. 30.9.08. Pte. GP,79.

²Grey to Lowther. 28.9.08. tel. No.253.

³Grey to Buchanan. 28.9.08. tel. No.250.

⁴Grey to Buchanan. 28.9.08. tel. No.250.

to Bulgarian independence.¹ In London the Ottoman representative claimed that the reactionaries might exploit the situation in order to upset the new regime.² In the Foreign Office it was found easier to reconcile the Bulgarian danger with the support for the new regime by arguing that even a successful war would be to the advantage of the reactionaries.³

On 1 October it became clear that the Bulgarian declaration of independence was imminent. The Foreign Office still found this hard to believe.⁴ Two days later the Foreign Office was informed of the imminent annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and a date was given for the proclamation of Bulgarian independence.⁵ On the same day Hardinge asked the Austrian Ambassador to postpone the annexation for a couple of months "until the present crisis in the Balkan Peninsula has subsided."⁶ Aehrenthal rejected any possibility of Ottoman resistance, because of the "utter disorganisation" in the Ottoman Administration and Army. Britain and France decided to co-ordinate their action vis-à-vis Austria's aggression. The French idea of a Conference was rejected by the British since they could not rely on the support of Russia after her collusion with Austria at Buchlau.⁷ In the Foreign Office it was visualised that they would be isolated at such a Conference, which would make it impossible to give more than

¹ Lowther to Grey. 29.9.08. tel.No.282.

² Grey to Lowther. 2.10.08. tel.No.415.

³ Same to Same. 2.10.08. tel.No.262.

⁴ Buchanan to Grey. 1.10.08. tel.No.29. Secret. BD.V.No.275 & minutes.

⁵ Bertie to Grey. 3.10.08. tel.No.49. conf. BD.V.No.285. S. to S. tel. no.50. conf. Ibid., No.286.

⁶ Memo. by Hardinge. 3.10.08. Ibid., No.287.

⁷ Bertie to Grey. 4.10.08. No.580A. conf. Ibid., No.294.

moral support to the Ottoman Empire, which it was admitted would be of no great help.¹ Concerning Bulgaria, Russia had made it clear to Bulgaria that she would not lift a finger if Ottoman troops occupied their territory,² but the veracity of the Russian language at Sophia, was greatly doubted by the Foreign Office.³

At Constantinople Kiamil, who was doing his best to control the press and to prevent any public excitement, still relied on British efforts to control Sofia. The Grand Vizier had no alternative but to believe that loyalty towards existing Treaties must produce favourable results.⁴ But even this was to no avail. The British Government had no illusions as to the meaning of the coming events. On the very eve of Bulgaria's proclamation of independence and the annexation of Bosnia, Grey told Rifaat, the Ottoman Ambassador, that the new regime should accept both the independence and the annexation as there were merely "injurious from the point of view of sentiment and prestige." Grey advised the new regime not to go to war, because "what Turkey most needed now was time and money. War would deprive her of both." He promised that Britain would support any Ottoman claim for a money indemnity, and stated that "all" British sympathies were with the new regime.⁵

The night of 5 October was a busy one at the British Embassy at Constantinople. Tewfik Pasha, the Ottoman Minister for Foreign Affairs, came over to see Lowther at midnight.⁶ Tewfik considered

¹ Ibid., minute by Tilley. FO/371/550.

² Nicolson to Grey. 3.10.08. tel.No.182. BD.V. No.283.

³ Ibid., minute FO/371/550.

⁴ Lowther to Grey. 3.10.08. tel.No.289. BD.V.No.284.

⁵ Grey to Lowther. 5.10.08. tel.No.284, BD.V. No.296.

⁶ Lowther to Grey. 5.10.08. tel.No.294.

the Bulgarian and Austrian steps as a "severe blow" to the new regime. He tried, in vain, to get an explanation for the British attitude. The Ottoman statesmen had to wait for these blows in order to see that Britain's pro-Ottoman declarations made on the immediate aftermath of the Revolution were mere words. Britain on her part could not deviate from the policy of the rest of the Powers. Indeed, the realities of British policy were far removed from Ottoman expectations. Lowther tried to calm Kiamil by sending to him the most experienced member of his staff, Fitzmaurice, who stayed most of the night with the Grand Vizier.¹

Soon the Porte realized that there was nothing to be done but to refer the matter to the Powers. Lowther advised the Ottoman Cabinet to cast all blame on the old regime as responsible for the weakness of the Empire.² On the day of the proclamation of Bulgaria's independence Grey, in an attempt to find an agreement and combined attitude with Russia, decided that the new regime should be content with protests and compensation. Grey realized that this line alone would be accepted in consultations with the Powers. It was considered as an "attitude friendly to Turkey".³ Nicolson was assured by the Russians that they would act together with Britain in the interests of "Young Turkey", in face of the Austro-Bulgarian collusion against the new regime.⁴ The Ottoman Empire once more became a pawn in the Powers game, and Britain had once more to play a part. As Grey realized on 7 August the favourable declarations were not meant to be a return to the Beaconsfield's policy.⁵ To be pro-Ottoman without being

¹ Same to Same. 5.10.08. tel.No.295. BD.V. No.298. Same to Same 5.10. tel.No.294.

² Lowther to Grey. 5.10.08. tel.No.294. Minutes.

³ Grey to Nicolson. 5.10.08. tel.No. 432. BD.V. No.301.

⁴ Nicolson to Grey. 6.10.08. No.439. conf. Ibid., No.322 and minutes.

⁵

anti-Russian was an impossible task in the growing European tension, when Britain was becoming more and more dependent on the friendship of Russia and France. The new regime had to pay a heavy price for the worsening European situation.

CHAPTER 2: BETWEEN CRISIS AND COUNTER-REVOLUTION -
OCTOBER 1908 - APRIL 1909.

A. The Effect of the International Crisis.

The Bulgarian proclamation of independence (5.10), the annexation of Bosnia and Crete's announcement of her unification with Greece, were all severe blows to the new regime, arousing great indignation in the Ottoman Empire.¹ The British Government accepted the Bulgarian and Austrian acts as faits accomplis. Britain, however, decided to obtain financial compensation for the Porte and to take part in a conference, on the "distinct" understanding that it would not involve further spoliation of the Ottoman Empire. The assent of the Porte would be obtained before the conference took place.² The British attitude was that the Empire lost nothing materially, but only in sentiment and prestige. Grey said that what happened was "injurious" to the new regime, and turned the Young Turks "from a peaceful movement into a military one."³ From Constantinople Lowther tried to engender a more pro-Ottoman attitude by rejecting Buchanan's recommendation for immediate recognition of Bulgarian independence,⁴ for such a recognition might push the new regime to act "in a spirit of desperation". The Ambassador realized that his Government might fail to give even the "moral support" that she had promised the new regime. Buchanan's recommendation was not accepted, and Grey informed the Bulgarians that their declaration of independence

¹ Ahmad, pp.24-5. On the wider implication see: Schmitt, The Annexation of Bosnia, 1908-9. (Cambridge Mass, 1937), passim. F.R. Bridge, The Diplomatic Relations between G. Britain and Austria-Hungary, 1906-12 (London Ph.D., 1966) p.186 ff.

² Nicolson to Grey. 5.10.08, tel.No.184, op.cit., minutes.

³ Grey to Bertie, 5.10.08, No.477, BD.V. No.306.

⁴ Buchanan later admitted his support for Bulgaria's enmity to the new regime; see his: My Mission to Russia, and other Diplomatic Memories, vol.1 (London, 1925) p.79.

was "a plain" violation of the Treaty of Berlin.¹ Lowther suggested that a conference or consultations between the Powers could help to gain time and to calm the Ottoman population. The Foreign Office was less enthusiastic and worked for a postponement of a conference in order to prepare the agenda carefully, so that they might avoid such a delicate problem as the passage of the Straits.² The British could in fact afford to give moral support to the Porte, because now the Russians themselves felt embittered over Bulgaria's collusion with Austria. It was suggested in the Eastern Department, that there was a danger of Germany becoming once again the Ottomans' friend, as the Porte might realise "the weakness of British and French as compared with German support." But this possibility was rejected by Hardinge.³

To satisfy Ottoman amour propre, Grey was prepared for the conference to be held at Constantinople. This was too much for Lord Fitzmaurice, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary, who was afraid of the "atmosphere of Oriental intrigue in which everything in Constantinople is bathed", and which he regarded as unfavourable to "honest diplomacy". He was thinking of the experiences of 1876 and 1882, and it was clear that in these matters the new regime was no more reliable than the old.⁴ Clemenceau and Pichon were pressing for an immediate conference, otherwise war might break out, and they promised Russian support for the British demands for no further diminution of the Ottoman Empire.⁵ From St. Petersburg, however, Tcharykov asked, "strictly and confidentially"

¹ Lowther to Grey, 6.10.08., tel.No.296, Ibid., No.313. Grey to Buchanan, 6.10.08, tel.Nos. 51, 53, Ibid., Nos.319, 320.

² Grey to Bertie, 6.10.08. tel.No. 156, Ibid., No.314.

³ Buchanan to Grey, 5.10.08, conf.No.40, Minutes by Tilley and Hardinge FO/371/550. See: Schmitt, op.cit., for the German reaction.

⁴ Nicolson to Grey, 7.10.08., tel.No.188, Minutes by Grey & Fitzmaurice Ibid. No.325.

⁵ Bertie to Grey, 7.10.08, No.390, BD.V. No.353.

for the free egress of warships through the Straits.¹

The situation became more hopeful when an extraordinary meeting of the Ottoman Cabinet had decided against military measures and Kiamil's suggestion for a conference to discuss the Bosnian and Bulgarian questions alone, was welcomed at the Foreign Office because of the limited scope. The Grand Vizier instructed the Valis of the three Macedonian vilayets to prevent any violent acts against the Bulgarian population. He spoke to the press in the capital of the need to keep a moderate and restrained tone towards Bulgaria whilst maintaining a "strong annoyance" towards Austria and Germany. Even Tilley commented with satisfaction that Kiamil's actions were "very wise", while taking as natural the distrust with which the Porte regarded the Russian and Austrian Ambassadors.²

While they might expect Russia not to follow an anti-Ottoman line in the Bulgarian and Bosnian questions, the British still had to be circumspect. Nicolson reminded the Foreign Office on October 8 that Russia's favourable attitude towards the Ottoman Empire since the Revolution, was not motivated by the "beaux yeux" of the Young Turks. Russia's support was given in order to strengthen her position in the struggle between Slavism and Germanism, and she would demand compensation at the Straits to satisfy her Slavophil public opinion.³ But any change in Russia's favour, Hardinge argued, would be at the expense of Britain.⁴ Kiamil and Tewfik were understandably "not quite easy" as to Russia's policy in the matter of Bulgarian independence. They were more anxious and suspicious of Russia's suggestion on the

¹ Nicolson to Grey, 7.10.08., No.446, most confidential.

² Lowther to Grey, 7.10.08, tel.No.500. Minutes by Tilley & Hardinge.

³ Nicolson to Grey, 8.10.08, Pte. BD.V. No.554.

⁴ Nicolson to Grey, 7.10.08, tel.No.188, Minute by Hardinge.

Straits. Hardinge added one more reason for Britain's opposition to the inclusion of the Straits question in the agenda, for there would be an outcry in Britain unless something "really substantial" were done to strengthen the Young Turks. This could be achieved by, as Tyrrell believed, an international or Entente guarantee to the Porte of foreign loan devoted to internal improvements. The makers of British foreign policy thought it would be possible to solve the Russo-Ottoman payment by a generous financial attitude of the Powers to the new regime.¹ Nevertheless, Grey told Rifaat, the Ottoman Ambassador, that the status of the Straits should be changed in Russia's favour. Rifaat stated that this would lay his country open to a coup de main. The Ambassador was promised, however, that the unification of Crete with Greece would not be allowed.²

The British belief that the Porte should give way to Bulgaria was intensified by a pessimistic report from the War Office on the chances of the Ottoman army, weakened by the dismissal of thirty per cent of its complement by the Young Turks.³ Nevertheless, the Foreign Office had to regard the new regime as a factor of stability in the Near East. "If the new regime was overthrown," Grey told the Italian Ambassador, "there would be chaos and confusion throughout the whole of the Turkish Empire, and such trouble as Europe had not known for a long time".⁴ But Mallet and Grey admitted that there would be "some inconvenience" in guaranteeing the integrity of the Ottoman Empire. Mallet doubted whether there was any chance of establishing

¹ Lowther to Grey, 8.10.08, tel.No.304, BD.V. No.358, Minutes by Hardinge and Grey.

² Grey to Lowther, 9.10.08. No.428, BD.V. No.349.

³ War Office to Foreign Office 9.10.08, conf.Notes on the Military Position in the Balkans. FO/421/244/35118.

⁴ Grey to Egerton, 10.10.08, No.154. BD.V. No.354.

good government in Macedonia and raised the possibility that the union of some of the vilayets with Bulgaria might become "irresistible". There was little left of the earlier British sympathy for the revolution: "it would not be popular here, if we were bound to support the Turk. The inconveniences of such promises is exemplified in Crete".¹

The British Government decided to recognize the Austrian and Bulgarian actions, but to arrange some pecuniary compensation for the new regime and support a loan guaranteed by, and demonstrating the goodwill of, the Powers. The Foreign Office saw the loan as consolidating Young Turk power.² It was the best the new regime could expect from the British Government. Basically, the Foreign Office supported the Russian demand for a change of the status of the Straits, on the condition that it was accepted "voluntarily" by, and on terms satisfactory to, the Ottoman Government. The British thus hoped to satisfy both the Russian demand for a change, and to remove the Ottoman fear that it might involve a danger to their security. They bowed to the Ottoman wish to exclude the Straits question from the conference agenda, but would not oppose in principle free passage to Russia.³

Meanwhile the Porte stiffened their attitude in the questions of Bosnia and Bulgaria. The Foreign Office maintained that they ought to give in on claims which were mainly "sentimental". Tilley was too pessimistic an observer to believe that Bulgaria's aspirations to Macedonia could be prevented. Mallet, contrary to what he had said on the previous day, thought that the Bulgarian threat could be avoided by good administration in Macedonia.⁴ Ignoring the internal and external

¹ Clarke (Budapest) to Grey, 6.10.08, No.37. Minutes, 12.10.08. FO/371/552.

² Grey to Lowther, 12.10.08, tel.No.335. BD.V. No.360.

³ Grey to Lowther, 12.10.08, tel.No.339. BD.V. No.361.

⁴ Lowther to Grey, 12.10.08, tel.No.317. Minutes, 13.10. BD.V. No.362

nationality problems of the Ottoman Empire, Mallet cited the successful administrative reforms of modern Japan. But there was greater apprehension over the Straits. Grey told Izvolsky that his suggestion was too one-sided to make it acceptable to British public opinion. A change which favoured Russia would be considered as a strategic disadvantage only to be offset by an increase in British naval forces in the Mediterranean. Izvolsky for his part tried to convince Grey that his country's attitude to the new regime had entirely changed, for: "Russia now desired to support Turkey as a barrier against the Austrian advance."¹ But Grey was immovable as the Russian suggestion did not give Britain a reciprocal advantage. Grey reckoned on Izvolsky's weak position in Russia, which enabled him to reject the Foreign Minister's plan without endangering the Entente with Russia.² Izvolsky was ready to agree to free passage to all belligerents if the Ottoman Empire would remain neutral. This plan was more reciprocal than the earlier but of no real value to Britain, who had a "settled principle" that her fleet could enter the Straits only in the event of her own alliance with the Ottoman regime.³ Japan's resistance to relaxations to Russia at the Straits also played a role.⁴

Keen as Britain was to strengthen her friendship with Russia and to maintain her entente with France, she was also careful not to worsen her relations with Germany. Grey thought it would be unwise to affront Germany by ignoring her.⁵ Britain followed an entirely different line from her, for the German suggestion that they guarantee the remaining territories of the Ottoman Empire, was rejected by Britain.

¹ Grey to Nicolson, 12.10.08, No.317, Ibid., No.364, same to same, 14.10.08, No.318, Secret, Ibid., No.379. Hardinge to Bertie, 12.10.08. Pte. BP,180. Bertie to Tyrrell, 16.10.08. Pte. Ibid.

² Nicolson to Grey, 13.10.08, tel.No.198. BD.V. No.366. Hardinge to Nicolson, 13.10.08, Pte., Ibid., No.372.

³ Grey to Nicolson, 13.10.08, No.324, Ibid., No.371.

⁴ Macdonald to Grey, 25.10.08, No.280, Ibid., No.403. Grey to Macdonald, 20.10.08, tel.No.51, Ibid., No.398. Macdonald to Grey, 21.10.08, No.76 minutes, FO/371/560.

⁵ Grey to Lowther, 13.10.08, tel.No.349.

Such a guarantee could be given stated Tilley, only after the Ottomans had shown their "good behaviour". Tilley hardly needed encouragement for his anti-Ottoman views, which he frequently propagated in the Foreign Office. He saw Ottoman rule in Europe as no more than "the subjection of one race to another", and a guarantor's task would therefore be "unpleasant". Tilley was the champion of the Gladstonian tradition in the Foreign Office. He was totally unaffected by the revolution: "however great our admiration for the Young Turks, the fact remains that the population of Macedonia is largely European and that so far as the history of the last 450 years is a guide, capacity for administration is not in the anatomy of the Turk". Mallet hoped that the Germans would not put the idea of the territorial guarantee into the heads of the Young Turks. Hardinge and Grey also regarded the idea as unacceptable to other Powers too, as it was likely to raise more difficulties than it would solve.¹

The British could still explain their position on the Straits to Rifaat as pro-Ottoman, since they accompanied it with sympathy for Ottoman fears over Macedonia. Grey thought that the new regime would find the bitter pills of Bulgaria and Bosnia more palatable if it were told that its troubles derived from the old regime. But he was now more realistic, for he wrote it was not only good government that was the "true" safeguard against similar troubles in the future but also a strong Ottoman army.²

Kiamil now appeared ready to bargain on the Bosnian and Bulgarian questions.³ But Lowther wrote that the Ottomans still saw

¹ Ibid., Minutes, 14.10. FO/371/552.

² Grey to Lowther, tel.No.348, very conf. BD.V. No.370.

³ Lowther to Grey, 13.10.08. Pte. BD.V. No.375.

⁶ Contd. from previous page.

Lascelles to Grey, 13.10.08, tel.No.54. BD.V. No.367.

the Bulgarians as a danger. He could not see how the Ottomans might be satisfied with a guarantee by the Powers after their disappointment over the Treaty of Berlin. He warned that although at the moment the Ottomans were very calm, their present mood might change and give rise to "a disagreeable anti-European movement". The reactionaries felt stronger as a result of the external troubles, and would be even stronger should the new regime fail to receive suitable compensation. Still Kiamil was in a strong position for the present and the CUP "somewhat declining".¹

On 13 October the Foreign Office was ready to show an even more favourable attitude towards the new regime. They now suggested the abrogation of articles 23 and 61 of the Treaty of Berlin, which promised administrative reform for the European and the Armenian provinces respectively,*and that, as soon as a satisfactory state of Ottoman administration had been attained, regular treaties between civilized states should replace the Capitulation treaties. In return the Ottoman Empire was to recognise the annexation of Bosnia and the independence of Bulgaria, while Austria was to restore Novibazar and the Porte was to be compensated for the other abandoned territories. In addition Article 29 of the Berlin Treaty, which promised to settle border conflicts between the Porte and Montenegro, was to be abrogated in favour of Montenegro.² The Foreign Office regarded these important concessions as a "considerable moral support" for the new regime. Provided the Porte agreed, their acceptance in a conference should avoid further threat to the Ottoman Empire.

¹Lowther to Grey, 13.10.08, No.667.

²Grey to Lowther, 13.10.08, tel.No.344. BD.V. p.440.n.1.

*The Armenians were promised also security. See for the text of the Treaty of Berlin: G. Britain.Parliamentary Papers, 1878. vol.83, pp.690-705 and: W.N. Medlicott, The Congress of Berlin and After (London, 1938).

But Lowther reported that Kiamil was again uncompromising. He suggested that Eastern Roumelia have the same status as Crete. Articles 23 and 61 had been abrogated by the establishment of the Constitution. The Grand Vizier foresaw a further deterioration in the situation should a conference ratify the Bulgarian and Austrian spoliation. Though Britain had suggested that the Cretan question be excluded from the conference, Kiamil was afraid that the Powers might sanction its union with Greece, and thus threaten Ottoman rule on the Aegean Islands.¹

The Young Turks were more optimistic than Kiamil on their country's chance in a conference, chiefly because of their reliance on the Ottomans' "two firm friends", Britain and France.² But Kiamil was nearer to the truth. Grey told Rifaat that the new regime should not dispute "questions of form", and that Britain's policy "was not due to any lack of sympathy, but to real considerations for the political interests of Turkey,"³ and he went as far as to play down the Russian hostility to an Ottoman refusal to change the status quo of the Straits.⁴

But inside the FO scepticism predominated over hope. Tilley did not believe in the possibility of a Greco-Ottoman compromise. The Greeks would instead take an early opportunity to oust the Ottomans from Roumelia and the Islands.⁵ Hardinge questioned the nature of the new regime when he said that the "military party were getting the upper hand at Constantinople". He also rejected the stiff Ottoman attitude in a tone which could hardly be described as

¹Lowther to Grey, 15.10.08, tel.No.327, Ibid., No.382.

²"The Tanin", the CUP organ, quoted in: same to same, 14.10.08. No.668.

³Grey to Lowther, 15.10.08, No.434, BD.V. No.383. Grey to Lowther, 16.10.08, tel.No.358, Ibid., 388.

⁴Grey to Izvolsky, 15.10.08. Pte. conf. Ibid., No.387.

⁵Elliot to Grey, 14.10.08, No.39, minute, FO/371/552.

a sympathetic one: "it is quite impossible to put back the clock and the faits accomplis in Bosnia and Bulgaria have to be eventually recognised on certain terms ... Kiamil Pasha should realise that even after a successful war against Bulgaria, Russia and Europe would not allow East Roumelia to go back to Turkey ... It is useless to reply ... to Kiamil Pasha's statements but it may be pointed out that in saying that Articles 23 and 61 of the Treaty are to be regarded as automatically abrogated by the establishment of the constitution is to assume an attitude as illegal from an international point of view as that of Austria and Bulgaria in connection with recent events."¹ But in the Foreign Office there was even a belief that the "sore point" in the Near East was Britain's Entente with Russia.² British influence in Bulgaria was considered as "completely" destroyed. The conviction spread that the crisis had been brought about by the "unconciliatory" attitude, as Mallet put it, of the Young Turks with regard to Bulgarian schools. He hoped that the Young Turks whose power was over-estimated in the Foreign Office had learnt their lesson "otherwise Macedonia will follow".³ So far as Britain was concerned the unwritten Entente with Russia was proving its usefulness, even from the Ottoman point of view. The "Neue Freie Presse" was not exaggerating when it remarked that the British entente with Russia had to be paid from "Turkish pockets".⁴ Grey was optimistic: "Both with Turkey and Bulgaria the feeling towards us will in the long run adjust itself to political interests, or to their view of the interests respectively."⁵

¹ Lowther to Grey, 15.10.08, tel.No.327, op.cit., Minute.

² Goschen to Grey, 16.10.08, No.152, FO/371/552.

³ Buchanan to Grey, 14.10.08, No.84. Minutes, 19.10.

⁴ Goschen to Grey, 16.10.08, No.152.

⁵ n.3.

On 26 October, however, Kiamil presented Lowther with a secret plan to end the crisis.¹ According to this plan Bosnia would become an independent principality governed by a Protestant Prince from a neutral State, selected by the Powers and "facilitated" by the Porte. Kiamil also suggested defensive and offensive alliances with Bulgaria, Serbia and Montenegro and hoped for the support of Britain, France, Russia and Italy. Rifaat reminded the Foreign Office that Kiamil relied on Britain. Grey considered this to be an advantage as he was sure that this meant that Kiamil would do nothing without first taking the Foreign Office's advice.² Lowther, however, felt Kiamil's plan had a "wild" character and wrote critically on the personality of the Grand Vizier. "He is such a frightfully difficult man to get to talk, and so painfully indistinct when he does, that it is very difficult to appreciate what is really in his mind."³ The British Government, more optimistically, was ready to guard the Ottoman interest in the Straits, since it was essential both to Britain's own interests in the Mediterranean and to the very existence of the new regime and the Empire itself. "If Russia helps to pull Turkey through her present difficulties", Grey told Nicolson, "an arrangement about the Straits may be received with more confidence by Turkey later on."⁴ Nevertheless, Hardinge dismissed Kiamil's recent plan as "most extraordinary" and "impossible" and the Ottoman Government as "children".⁵ But he was not worried about the attitude of the Porte, since he knew that the Ottomans had no alternative but to give in.

¹Lowther to Grey, 26.10.08, No.365. Secret. BD.V.No.404.

²Grey to Lowther, 26.10.08, No.448, BD.V. No.406.

³Lowther to Grey, 27.10.08, Pte. op.cit.

⁴Grey to Nicolson, 26.10.08. Pte. BD.V. No.409 (b).

⁵Hardinge to Nicolson, 28.10.08. Pte., Ibid., No.414.

Although Lowther reported that none of the Ottomans had any confidence in Bulgarian honesty or generosity, the Foreign Office thought it essential to promote a "Balkan Federation" or Alliance to include Bulgaria, in order to prevent her joining Germany and Austria.¹ Tilley, however, felt that an alliance with Bulgaria would only be a temporary solution. Kiamil, moreover, revealed little enthusiasm for this idea, which, by its anti-Austrian nature, served Servian or Montenegrin interests rather than that of the Ottomans.² The proposed Alliance, a favourite of Buchanan, found little support in the Constantinople Embassy.

To secure the international position of the Ottoman Empire the Foreign Office continued to favour the creation of an Ottoman-Balkan entente. The danger was that Bulgaria might gravitate to the Austro-German orbit. The impasse at which Austro-Ottoman relations had arrived made it all the more desirable that everything possible should be done to bring about a Bulgaro-Ottoman rapprochement.³ Thus Britain had to be careful not to press either Bulgaria or the Ottoman regime too hard. "Mr. Tilley is mistaken," commented Hardinge, "in saying that we are committed to Turkey to press for the taking over of a part of the debt by Bulgaria and the payment of the Bulgarian tribute. All that has been said is that we would endeavour to get as large a compensation as possible for Turkey."⁴ The very existence of the new regime was regarded as a guarantee for such a rapprochement because Bulgaria could not expect to obtain such good terms from a reactionary regime.⁵ Lowther was less optimistic than the Foreign Office as to the immediate chances of a Bulgaro-Ottoman rapprochement. "There will

¹ Lowther to Grey, 3.11.08. Pte. Ibid. Buchanan to Grey, 4.11.08, tel. No.75, very conf. BD.V. No.427. Same to same, 9.11.08, No.92, conf. ibid., No.436. Minutes, Grey to Lowther, 30.10.08, tel.No.420. Lowther to Grey, 2.11.08, No.379, same to same, 5.11.08, tel.No.385 Minutes.

² Buchanan to Grey, 7.11.08. Minute. Lowther to Grey, 6.11.08, No.751. Minute. Greene to Grey, 28.10.08. No.50, conf. Lowther to Grey, 6.11.08. No.751.

³ Hardinge to Lowther, 1.12.08. Pte.LP. Hardinge to Buchanan, 1.12.08.

inevitably come a time when the Turkish worm will turn. The Turk of 1908 is not what it has hitherto been and national feeling must now be reckoned with." The plan for a rapprochement could also be endangered by the Cretan question, for Lowther's information told him that Kiamil was likely to be uncompromising. An adverse British attitude, he warned, might result in a boycott of British goods and ships.¹

London was, however, preoccupied with broader issues than those posed by the new regime. British policy took it for granted that Germany and Austria had "thrown over" the new regime. Hardinge was sure that Aehrenthal had intended to upset the new regime. He sounded most optimistic when he wrote to his friend Goschen that the financial situation was "not really so very bad". "There is very little doubt that the new regime in Turkey will be able to maintain itself, if only it is left alone".² Even after the recent blows received from Austria and Bulgaria the chance of its survival seemed to him bright indeed. "I am glad to say," he wrote to Bryce, "that the Young Turk regime seems to be going on all right at present, although it has yet many difficulties before it. If we can see the federation of the small Slav States of the Balkans with Turkey to support them, I do not think we need have much fear as to the future for some years to come."³ If the Bulgarian question was to be solved, the British Government

¹Lowther to Hardinge, 1.12.08. Pte.LP.

²Hardinge to Goschen, 1.12.08. Pte. HP,13.

³Hardinge to Bryce, 4.12.08. Pte. Ibid.

³Contd. from previous page.

Pte. HP,13. Nicolson to Grey, 1.12.08, tel.No.279 BD.V. No.469.
Same to same, 1.12.08, No.556, Ibid., No.470.

⁴Buchanan to Grey, 24.11.08, No.100, minutes by Tilley and Hardinge, 30.11.08 FO/371/557.

⁵Grey to Bertie, 30.11.08, No.555 (conversation with Cambon).

would agree to leave the Bosnian question to the future.¹ Nevertheless, both the Porte and Bulgaria were far from a change in their basic attitudes.²

Hardly was Britain successful in bringing about a rapprochement between the Ottoman Empire on the one hand and Bulgaria and Austria on the other, than she had to face the Cretan question again. Whilst the other Powers were pushing for the island's union with Greece, Britain was proud of acting as a "drag", preventing the "Turks" from being badly treated.³

At this stage Tittoni, the Italian Minister for Foreign Affairs, provoked the British Ambassador at Rome into a discussion of British policy. He said that public opinion in Italy thought that "material" British support had been guaranteed to the new regime, in the event of Austrian aggression, through the British Mediterranean fleet. The British Ambassador replied that Britain had no material interests of her own at stake in the Balkans.⁴ Mallet, challenged by Tittoni's views, commented that "if M. Tittoni knows so much, he also knows that it is the movements of the British fleet which have prevented Austria from attacking Turkey by sea." Mallet was convinced that there was no difference between the two different levels of British policy, the declared and the undeclared: "The policy of support to the new regime in Turkey announced by you [Grey] and by the P.M. in public speeches is fully endorsed by public opinion and in giving effect to it G. Britain welcomes the assistance of all the Powers who share her views."

¹Hardinge to Goschen, 1.12.08. Pte.HP,13.

²Grey to Buchanan, 2.12.08, No.75. Grey to Lowther, 3.12.08, tel.No.472. BD.V. No.473. Same to same, 3.12.08, No.506.

³Hardinge to Lowther, 15.12.08. Pte.LP.

⁴Rodd to Grey, 15.12.08, No.195, conf.

It is clear that Britain was ready to do more for the new regime in the case of Crete: "HMG feel that it [Crete] must be treated with the greatest delicacy and with the utmost regard for Turkish susceptibility. We are pledged to consult the Porte before coming to any decision and to ignore Turkish susceptibility in the matter would be to run the risk of exasperating the Young Turkish party impeding a general pacific settlement."¹ In fact, the danger to the new regime on its European frontier was not considerable, so long as Russia assured Britain that she also intended having a close understanding with the new regime. The reason was that she could not go to war against both Austria and Germany.² Britain, however, could not remain unaffected by the spread of the crisis over Bosnia. The Austrian press accused the British Embassy at Constantinople of inciting the Young Turks in their anti-Austrian policy.³ It was generally believed that Britain would send her ships to protect the Ottoman regime if Austria sent her ships to stop the boycott.⁴ Not only Mallet or the German Ambassador in Vienna, but also Cartwright, the British Ambassador, believed the deterrent role of the British Mediterranean Fleet against Austria to be a fact: "the presence of the fleet was considered by Austria as a warning to abstain from touching the new Turkish regime." Mallet now suggested that since the fleet had gone back to Malta, the Admiralty should be told that the fleet ought to return to Marmarice or to its environs, since the Austro-Ottoman negotiations might break down. Consequently, Grey told McKenna the fleet would not be "out of reach".⁵ Tilley, more realistically, expressed the great reluctance with which the Foreign

¹ Rodd to Grey, 15.12.08, No.195, conf. Minute by Mallet, 18.12.08. FO/371/558.

² Nicolson to Grey, 15.12.08, No.589.

³ Cartwright to Grey, 17.12.08, No.221. Same to same, 6.1.09, No.2. BD.V. No.503. Same to same, 7.1.09. Pte. Ibid., No.508.

⁴ Lowther to Grey, 30.12.08. No.901.

Office was ready to give material help to the new regime: "I imagine the last thing we want is to go to war with Austria and Bulgaria to save Turkey even if no other Power did intervene, and we can only hope that something will turn up to bring about a settlement between Turkey and Bulgaria before the spring." But Hardinge disclosed to Buchanan that "We should probably have to give naval support to the Turks if they were the victims of Austrian aggression".¹ On the other hand, Hardinge was sure that the Bulgarians were bluffing. Buchanan's view that the danger of war was real, was rejected at the Foreign Office. Hardinge had great confidence that Russia would solve the problems created by Bulgaria. Russia could, very easily, block the Bulgarian army by mobilisation at Odessa. Further, she would be foolish to allow an Austro-Bulgarian combination to dominate the Balkans.² Nevertheless, he was still suspicious as to the existence of an Austro-Bulgarian collusion to force "unwelcome" terms upon the new regime or to provoke war.³

The failure of the negotiations for an alliance between the Ottoman Empire and the Balkan States at last persuaded Hardinge that this was impossible. He commented that the "difficulty of an 'entente' or defensive alliance between the Balkan States and Turkey is largely due to their inveterate jealousy of each other and to the secret desire of each of them to eat up Turkey. I fear that such an agreement is still a long way off."⁴ Lowther claimed in any case that he was sure that from the beginning Kiamil had only been playing with the

¹ Hardinge to Buchanan, 29.12.08. Pte. HP,13.

² Buchanan to Grey, 22.12.08. No.105. Minutes.

³ Same to same, 22.12.08, No.107. Minutes.

⁴ Greene (Bucharest) to Grey, 23.12.08, No.58. Minute, 28.12.

⁵ Contd. from previous page.

Cartwright to Grey, 21.12.08, No.105. Secret & conf. Minutes by Mallet and Grey.

Servians and the Montenegrins.¹

Britain however favoured the Ottomans and not the Bulgarians on the question of the pecuniary compensation, and against Bulgarian expectations they refused to apply further pressure on the Porte.² But the situation was in fact much more serious at the beginning of 1909 as the negotiations between the Ottomans on the one hand and the Austrians and Bulgarians on the other reached an impasse. Sinister rumours reached the Foreign Office that Austria might provoke an attack on the Ottoman Empire, pushing Bulgaria into seizing the opportunity to attack the Porte too. In the latter case the Foreign Office hoped that the Ottomans would inflict a "thorough good beating" upon the Bulgarians. Britain at least did not doubt for one moment the military qualifications of the Ottomans.³ Hardinge predicted that in the event of Austria provoking war with the Ottoman Empire "It seems to me difficult to imagine that we should be able to observe a neutral attitude in such a contingency. If we did so, I think we should lose our position in the Near East, and also amongst the Mahometan communities in Egypt, India and elsewhere."⁴ Of course, this was only the extreme possibility, because British policy was basically concerned to avoid war: "We shall strain every nerve to keep the peace of Europe."⁵

In the Foreign Office the British continued to display less enthusiasm for a Bulgaro-Ottoman alliance since it could lead to a direct involvement in the Near East, a situation they were trying to avoid: "I am apprehensive, (Grey wrote to Hardinge) of the consequences

¹ Lowther to Grey, 16.12.08. Pte.LP. Whitehead to Grey, 21.12.08, No.98, conf.

² Hardinge to Nicolson, 4.1.09, Pte. BD.V. pp.549/50. Grey to Lowther, 5.1.09, No.6.

³ Hardinge to Bryce, 1.1.09. Pte.HP,17. Grey to Cartwright, 6.1.09, No.4. BD.V. No.502.

⁴ Hardinge to Rodd, 1.1.09. Pte.HP,17.

⁵ Hardinge to Bryce, 1.1.09. Pte.HP.op.cit. Grey to Rodd, 8.1.09, No.6. BD.V. No.509.

of taking active steps to promote an alliance: if Turkey made it or would represent that she made it owing to pressure or advice from us, she would regard us quasi-responsible for seeking that Bulgaria played the game well for Turkey."¹ Not less urgent a question was Crete. Lowther warned the Foreign Office to avoid a visit of King Edward VII to Greece as this would "naturally create a considerable feeling of soreness and an impression that British sympathy for the new regime was less real than was imagined." But in the same breath Lowther was still very strict on his demand for control over any loan to the new regime to make sure that it was not spent on German war materials.² In the Foreign Office it was well understood that the King's visit should not now take place.³

The same circumspection was needed towards Bulgaria. This was at a time when Buchanan warned the Foreign Office that the Bulgarian army would not repeat the mistake of allowing the Ottomans to prepare themselves for a showdown. Tilley supported the Bulgarians saying that in time of war every Power would be on their side except Britain, while Grey defended the Porte's attitude.⁴

By January the external situation seemed to be improving. Hardinge was quite sure that the Porte would accept any solution that the Powers approved, since the Ottomans were in "a very conciliatory and peaceful frame of mind," with regard to Austria and Bulgaria.⁵ While problems like Bulgaria, Bosnia and Novibazar were nearing solution, Tilley raised the problems of Armenia and Macedonia. He argued that even if Article 61 was abolished, Britain should still

¹ Grey to Hardinge, 13.1.09. Pte.HP,17.

² Lowther to Hardinge, 6.1.09. Pte.LP. Lowther to Grey, 12.1.09.Pte. tel. same to same, 12.1.09, Pte. Ibid.

³ Same to same, 12.1.09, No.25. Minutes, FO/371/765.

⁴ Buchanan to Grey, 24.1.09, tel.No.10. BD.V. No.531.

⁵ Hardinge to Bryce, 29.1.09. Pte. HP,17.

retain "some" moral responsibility for Armenia. Contrary to their former attitude there was now unanimity in the Foreign Office against any modifications in the Treaty of Berlin for this might create new difficulties.¹ The main object was to solve the Ottoman-Bulgarian crisis. It was the attitude of the Bulgarian Government which was regarded at the Foreign Office as stiff; and Grey even thought of "a sharp and united pressure" by all the six Powers upon her.² This was indeed an important point in British policy: the Ottoman-Bulgarian difficulties must be settled through the Concert despite Russia's hesitations on the inclusion of Germany and Austria.³ Lowther, who favoured the Porte's point of view, claimed that Kiamil could not accept less than 125 million fr., since he had already been accused of needlessly sacrificing E. Roumelia in 1886 and he might now be attacked on similar grounds.⁴ Lowther was now instructed to do everything in his power to discourage the continuance of the boycott, in order to facilitate the Austro-Ottoman settlement.⁵ He added that war between Bulgaria and the Ottoman Empire could be avoided only if the former gave up her designs on Macedonia.⁶ For a moment the Ottoman refusal to agree to the Russian proposal, to take over a portion of the debt, dashed the hopes of the Foreign Office.⁷ The British Government had seen in the Russian proposal a "very wise" way of bringing Bulgaria into the Russian orbit, and thus improving relations

¹ Cartwright to Grey, 26.1.09. No.26. Minutes by Tilley, Mallet, Hardinge & Grey. 27.1. FO/371/748, see p.68. Lowther & Fitzmaurice supported the Armenian cause & in the FO it was already agreed that if Article 61 was to be abrogated "some saving clause" should replace it. Lowther to Grey, 27.10.08. No.705. Minutes, 30.10. FO/371/560. G. Hagopian to Grey 23.10.08. Minutes. FO/371/560/36965. Lowther to Grey, 10.11.08. No.763. Same to same, 2.12.08. No.821. conf. Memo by Fitzmaurice, 30.11. No.53. conf. FO/371/557.

² Grey to Nicolson, 27.1.09, tel.No.89. BD.V. No.535.

³ Grey to Bertie, 27.1.09, No.47. BD.V. No.537. Grey to Lowther, 27.1.09 No.44.

⁴ Lowther to Grey, 26.1.09. No.20. Minutes.

⁵ Grey to Lowther, 27.1.09. No.46.

⁶ Lowther to Hardinge, 3.2.09. Pte.LP.

⁷ Lowther to Grey, 4.2.09. tel.No.34. Minutes. FO/371/749.

between the Porte and Russia.¹ Nicolson warned that an Ottoman refusal would bring catastrophic results for which the Ottomans alone could be held responsible. Hardinge confirmed Nicolson's views as "quite sound".² Tilley reminded his chiefs that the real problem was that there were nearly twice as many Bulgarians as "Ottoman Turks" in the European provinces: "What they [the Turks] have to do is to persuade the Macedonians that they are better off as they are." He further thought and felt Britain ought "perhaps to allow a little sympathy for Turkish disappointment."³ Hardinge warned that a stubborn attitude on the part of the Porte might make war inevitable, "and might mean an end of the reformed administration."⁴ "The Turks ..." Hardinge wrote to Lowther, "should know that they cannot possibly gain territory. The age is past when Moslems could take possession of Christian territory."⁵

Satisfactorily for the British the Porte now moved towards the Russian proposal.⁶ But Lowther was still not hopeful that normal relations could be established after a financial settlement had been reached as "every Turk is deeply impressed with the conviction that Bulgaria has designs upon the Macedonian provinces of Turkey, and that she has no intention whatever of laying them aside."⁷ Moreover, the idea of an alliance was unacceptable as Bulgaria would never dare to join the Porte against Russia. The Foreign Office saw that Bulgaria was "very bellicose", but the Ottomans were "living in a fool's paradise" since war would be a "most terrible blow" for them.⁸ The

¹ Grey to Nicolson, 4.2.09. No.132.

² Nicolson to Grey, tel.No.51. Minutes.

³ Lowther to Grey, 5.2.09. No.36. Minute by Tilley. FO/371/750.

⁴ Grey to Lowther, 5.2.09. No.71. Hardinge to Block, 6.2.09. Pte.HP,17.

⁵ Hardinge to Lowther, 6.2.09. Pte. LP. Grey to Lowther, 8.2.09.Pte.Ibid

⁶ Lowther to Grey, 6.2.09, No.38. Grey to Lowther, 6.2.09. No.82. BD.V. No.561.

⁷ Lowther to Grey, 30.1.09. No.66.

⁸ Buchanan to Grey, 3.2.09. No.13. Minute by Maxwell, 8.2. FO/371/750. Hardinge to Lowther, 6.2.09. Pte.LP.

more serious deficiency of the Foreign Office was their belief that good government was the right remedy. Tilley represented a more realistic attitude in his own typical way commenting that Bulgaria had no designs on Macedonia "anymore than that the Spaniards had designs on Granada or the French on Calais. For the strength of the feelings the Turks must blame the conduct of their ancestors from the beginning of the 14th century to last July." He objected to Lowther's claim for strategic rectifications in favour of the Ottomans, since the Empire could find safeguards only in "her own strength and her good treatment of her Bulgarian subjects."¹

What was more decisive, however, was Britain's decision to support the Russian proposal as part of her European policy, for sympathy towards the new regime was to be in accordance with the general framework of British policy:

If I had refused to support the Russian proposal, [Grey wrote to Lowther,] the result would have been a diplomatic separation between Russia and us that would have reacted unfavourably on the whole of our relations. I should have thrown Russia back into the old belief that we were bent upon supporting Turkey against her, and disliked seeing her and Turkey drawn together. If I had insisted that I preferred the fixing by the Powers of the amount which Bulgaria should pay to Turkey direct I might have found that the other Powers had rallied to the support of the Russian proposal, and that Turkey and we had thus been put in the invidious position of disturbers of the peace. Or, at best, we should have had the support of only Germany and Austria, and this would have led to a new grouping of the Powers, affecting the whole international situation.²

The Ottoman Empire was the victim of the Powers' game, and Britain did not feel any doubts or hesitations as to where her true interests lay. There was no contradiction between her policy towards Russia and that towards the Ottoman Empire. What did happen was that Britain failed to foresee that Austrian and Bulgarian aggression would, so

¹Lowther to Grey, 30.1.09. No.66. Minutes, 8.2.

²Grey to Lowther, 8.2.09. Pte. LP.

quickly, cause a change in her sympathetic policy towards the new regime. In fact, there was no contradiction or dilemma in British policy, for the Foreign Office, Grey claimed, "deliberately risked losing our influence with Turkey in the support of Russian Diplomacy, and in the cause of peace by pressing the Turks to go as far as they have done in accepting the Russian proposal in principle."¹ He admitted to Lowther that "it was not from blindness or for any light reasons that I risked our popularity at Constantinople."² The friendship with Russia was too important an asset for Britain to risk for the sake of Ottoman "obstructive" policy. Grey saw no clash of interests with Russia since she also favoured Ottoman-Balkan friendship. Nicolson persuaded the Foreign Office of Russia's sincerity although Lowther had strong misgivings, since he could not believe that an Ottoman-Bulgarian entente could ever have a chance of realization.³ Fortunately, Russia's attention had gradually moved from the Ottoman Empire to Serbia and Montenegro. She was thus more anxious to keep her friendship with Britain, who had to assure her of "full diplomatic support" for a peaceful solution.⁴ But Tilley still envisaged a Russian seizure of Constantinople. He felt that Russia would never fight for Serbia against Austria and Germany; that was why she displayed such stiffness towards the Porte and why Izvolsky talked of giving up the Entente.⁵ But neither this nor Lowther's story of the secret relations between the Russian Embassy and the CUP, made any impression upon London.⁶

¹ Grey to Nicolson, 8.2.09, tel.No.154. M.B. Cooper, op.cit. pp.258-79.

² Grey to Lowther, 8.2.09. Pte. LP.

³ Ibid. and Lowther to Grey, 8.2.09. Pte. Ibid. Vamberg to Grey, 9.12.08. Pte. Minute by Grey, VP, 53.

⁴ Nicolson to Grey, 14.2.09, No.108. Grey to Nicolson, 14.2.09, tel.No. 187. BD.V. No.568. Hardinge to Nicolson, 16.2.09. Pte. BD.V. pp.596/7. Nicolson to Grey, 16.2.09, No.114. Same to same, 15.2.09. tel.No.75. BD.V.No.571.

⁵ Ibid., Minute, FO/371/750.

⁶ Lowther to Grey, 10.2.09. No.90. Minutes 15.2. FO/371/760.

The future of the Ottoman Empire depended on the kind of settlement she could achieve in the Balkans and the sort of regime that was established for the Empire. While the second question depended solely on the Ottomans themselves, the first was the concern and the interest of stronger outside Powers. While the Foreign Office regarded an agreement with Austria and Bulgaria as crucial to the future of the Ottoman Empire, the Ottomans themselves knew very well that these settlements would not solve the more fundamental problems of Russian and Bulgarian opposition towards Ottoman rule in Europe. The Grand Vizier claimed that a secret agreement existed between Bulgaria and Russia which would be detrimental to the future of the Empire. The Foreign Office's reaction was divided. Whilst Mallet thought that this agreement might have a "steadying effect" and bring the Porte in line with the Entente, Grey sounded more realistic when he commented: "Turkey will distrust Russia more than ever and this will make things difficult for us, if the liberal regime and the regeneration of Turkey continue."¹

What really had happened was that Britain was now supporting Russia's Slavophil policy in the Balkans. This, apart from worsening the relations with Germany and with Austria, was bound to cause impatience and loss of interest in the Foreign Office in the external problems of the Ottoman Empire. Nicolson, the Ambassador to Russia, never doubted the Russian sincerity for a detente with the new regime at Constantinople. He alarmed the Foreign Office by suggesting that Russia might break with the Triple Entente and listen to German advice.

¹ Lowther to Grey, 18.3.09, tel.No.89. Secret. Minutes. BD.V. No.708. Ironically on that very day, 18 March, a rosy picture of the new regime was presented to the House of Commons in a Blue Book on the "Constitutional Movement in Turkey". It was only on 14 December 19 that Grey was actually to explain to the Commons that this had been part of the British policy of giving a chance to the new regime. Turkey No.1 (1909) Cd.4529. Temperley & Penson, A Century of Diplomatic Blue Books, 1814-1914. (Cambridge, 1938), p.501.

² Nicolson to Grey, 23.3.09. No.188. conf. BD.V. No.752. Same to same 24.3.09. No.194, Ibid., No.761. Izvolsky in fact wanted to strengthen the Triple Entente, same to same, 24.3.09. Pte. BD.V. No.764.

The Ottomans, however, wished to guarantee themselves against the Bulgarian threat by making their consent to Ferdinand's new title conditional on his non-interference in Macedonia.¹ But as Bulgaria had become such an important factor in European politics, the Ottoman chances of winning over British support were doomed. Though Grey was far less concerned about the possibility of Russia's deserting her allies, the repercussions upon the future of the Ottoman Empire could not be delayed for long. The Foreign Office now held Bulgaria in better esteem owing to Russia's interest in winning her over, as the guardian of the Russian flank against Austrian expansion.² For indeed the political realities showed an increasing cohesion of the Triple Entente: "As to the anxiety felt by certain Russians as to a working understanding between G. Britain and Germany on the naval question," Hardinge argued, "I do not think that Russia need have any cause for alarm ... It is far more essential for us to have a good understanding with Russia in Asia and the Near East, than for us to be on good terms with Germany, and, since it is highly improbable that there can be any real improvement in the relations between Germany and France, it is absolutely vital to us to continue to support France, and to maintain what is now called the Triple Entente."³

¹Lowther to Grey, 22.3.09, tel.No.94. conf. FO/371/755.

²Grey to Nicolson, 2.4.09. Pte. BD.V. No.823. Hardinge to Nicolson. 30.3.09. Pte. Ibid., pp.763/4.

³Hardinge to de Salis, 29.12.08, Pte. HP,13. Hardinge to Nicolson, 4.1.09. Pte. BD.V. pp.549/50.

B. Lowther and the Young Turks.

Lowther had meanwhile extended his acquaintance and knowledge of the leaders of the Young Turks and with their political ideas. On 12 October he met Ahmed Riza and Sezi Bey. He was not impressed by Riza, whom he regarded as "too loquacious" and immature in his views and whose important position was "hardly justified". Lowther tried to persuade him that the Constitution should not be changed until the CUP had acquired more experience.¹ He advised the Foreign Office to waste no time over Riza, since he was not a practical man, and thus not to be reckoned as a forthcoming leader.² Riza disclosed to Lowther that the CUP did not have the best of relations with Kiamil. Yet, the CUP thought it advisable not to make any change for the present. Riza was anxious to discourage any further manifestations in favour of Britain, because it might excite the jealousy of other Powers. This did not prevent him from asking the British to give a "striking proof" of their desire to help the Constitutional Movement, by offering a large loan. Britain, according to Riza, should further show her sympathy by extending her protection over Asia Minor, confirmed by the Cyprus Convention, to the rest of the Empire. Lowther naturally rejected this suggestion, saying that the moment was hardly opportune for such questions. Lowther's uncomplimentary remarks found an echo in London. Mallet regarded Riza's views as disappointing and hoped that he was not representative of the intelligentsia. But he still saw Riza as an "idealist", whereas to Hardinge, Riza's views were "worthless".³

¹ Lowther to Grey, 12.10.08, No.657.

² Same to same, 13.10.08, Pte. BD.V. No.375.

³ Same to same, 12.10.08. No.657. Minutes, FO/371/560.

More important were his ominous remarks on the prospect of improvement in the internal administration, because of a "sad" lack of men and money. He found it difficult to hold "the balance of justice both between opposing parties and between conflicting interests. He concluded that the task of accomplishing reform was "so difficult as to be nearly impossible." The principle of equality between Christians and Moslems was considered as "abhorrent" to Moslem feeling. The mass of dismissed officials, the numerous exiles who had returned, the police who no longer received their "bakshish", the Sultan's ambiguity, the absence of reliable military forces in the capital, all this threatened the new regime, not to mention the external dangers. The Foreign Office ceased to believe, as early as 27 October 1908, that reconciliation was possible between Moslems and Christians: "The Turks in Europe will go to the wall in the long run". Optimists, like Maxwell, regarded the Army's support for the Constitution a guarantee that all would go well. But Mallet observed that the Bulgarian danger was more imminent than that from the reactionaries within. Hardinge agreed and argued that the Bulgarian agitation presented the greatest danger to a regenerated Empire.¹

Though Lowther's letters were full of anxieties on the internal situation in the Empire which was reflected in the Foreign Office, Grey sought to underrate the gravity when speaking to foreign Ambassadors. In a conversation with the Italian Ambassador he said that Lowther had written nothing that was "at all alarmist."² Thus Aehrenthal misinterpreted the realities of British policy when he said in a speech on 27 October: "England is at this moment completely

¹Lowther to Grey, 23.10.08, No.690. Minutes, 27.10. FO/371/560.

²Grey to Egerton, 27.10.08, No.145.

dominated by the idea of supporting and strengthening the new era in Turkey."¹

The Foreign Office was indeed deeply concerned over the repercussions of the recent onslaught of Austria and Bulgaria upon the new regime. As Hardinge said: "I very much fear that the serious complications created by Austria and Bulgaria are almost too much for such a tender plant as the Young Turk party."² To this fear Block added a gloomy report on the financial position of the Ottoman Empire. The CUP was determined to reorganize it, but if they failed, foreign control would be necessary. Block believed that the "chronic confusion" of the present was the inheritance of the old regime and not the fault of the new. "The Oriental", he stated, "is not dishonest or inefficient because he is an Oriental. He is capable of doing good work, and the administration of the Public Debt has given proofs of what can be done with native officials. The Oriental is a bad civil servant because he is badly paid and uncontrolled."³ The British were also concerned with the fate of the Sultan, and Lowther "never ceased" to warn the Young Turks of the danger involved in his deposition. "We have to be very careful with them (the Ottomans), as we should not like them to get the idea that we create difficulties for them."⁴ Since Kiamil had the support of the CUP only until Parliament opened, the Ambassador recommended not to rely entirely on him. The G.C.B. should be offered to Kiamil at the right psychological moment, namely when there was a decision on an agreement with Bulgaria and on a conference.⁵

¹Goschen to Grey, 28.10.08, No.165.

²Hardinge to Bryce, 23.10.08. Pte. HP,13.

³Memorandum by Block, 26.10.08. conf. in: Lowther to Grey, 27.10.08. No.722.

⁴Tyrrell to Lowther, 30.10.08. Pte. LP. Lowther to Grey, 3.11.08. Pte. Ibid. Hardinge to Lowther, 3.11.08. Pte. Ibid.

⁵Lowther to Hardinge, 10.11.08. Pte. LP. Lowther to Tyrrell, 9.11.08. Pte. Ibid.

The difficulties that British policy faced in solving the crisis did not only stem from Bulgaria's opposition or Kiamil's stubbornness, but also from the CUP. On 13 November Ahmed Riza and Dr. Nazim saw Grey and Hardinge in London. They repeated the idea of making Bosnia a buffer State under Austrian administration. If Austria refused, the Porte, supported by Britain, France and perhaps Russia, would maintain their protest. The next step, they argued, would be an alliance, within "five or six months" with the Balkan States, but they offered the Bulgarians no more than the "civil" possession of E. Roumelia. These views were naturally entirely unacceptable to the British Government. Grey replied that such an attitude would mean war. Britain would support only a large Balkan alliance including Bulgaria. The new regime needed time and peace and making Bosnia a buffer State would not contribute to that peace. The CUP's representatives may well have hoped for an alliance between the Ottoman Empire and Britain, followed by one with France. But "I told them", said Grey, "that our habit was to keep our hands free, though we made ententes and friendships. It was true that we had an alliance with Japan, but it was limited to certain distant questions in the Far East."¹ The Ottoman Empire, the representatives replied, was the Japan of the Near East² and the Cyprus Convention was still in force. Grey replied with the usual clichés expressing Britain's "entire sympathy" with the "good" work they were doing. Britain would help to organise the Customs and the Police. The Foreign Office's disappointment with the visits was considerable. "The

¹ Grey to Lowther, 13.11.08. Pte. LP.

² See Fitzmaurice's reference to Japan's victory over Russia as a remote cause of the Revolution. Fitzmaurice to Tyrrell, 25.8.08. Pte. op.cit. Vambéry, however, wrote on 11 September: "What has happened in Buddhistic Japan cannot be applied to Mohammedan Asia". Vambéry to Grey, 11.9.08. Pte. op.cit.

Turkish Government," Grey wrote to Lowther, "will have a difficult job if all the Young Turks are like them." Now London could formulate a clearer view of the Young Turks. At this stage, however, Kiamil and even the Sultan were still taken into account as major factors in the new regime.¹ While the Embassy was the first to query the capacity of the CUP, it was the Foreign Office which was first in expressing doubts on the future of Kiamil's Cabinet. It is not surprising that Tilley was the source of these doubts.²

Both the Foreign Office and the Embassy regarded the Young Turks as "visionaries", but Lowther's role was more difficult in the sense that he had to face Ottoman pressure in Constantinople in matters of financial aid, and the future of Bosnia and E. Roumelia: "I hope I have not been too insistent in favour of doing something for Turkey. They expect so much that I have to administer a good deal of cooling medicine and am anxious to point to practical things we have done for them. But they on their side must do something for us, and I am rather disappointed that some of these cartridge and shell contracts did not come our way. If we are going to put up money we should, I think, insist that some of it come back to our manufacturers." But he was also inclined to accept the business-like attitude of the new regime: "We cannot well insist on contracts coming to us for our beaux yeux, that would savour too much of the old regime."³

In public both Asquith and Grey spoke most sympathetically on the new regime. "A few months ago", said Grey, in a speech of

¹ Grey to Lowther, 13.11.08. Pte. LP. Same to same, 14.11.08. Pte. ibid. Hardinge to Lowther, 17.11.08. Pte. Ibid. Lowther to Grey, 13.11.08. No.773, BD.V. No.203. Ed.Add.

² Egerton to Grey, 17.11.08. No.184, conf. minutes, FO/371/556.

³ Lowther to Hardinge, 24.11.08. Pte. LP. For Cassel's reaction: Hardinge to Lowther, 1.12.08. Pte. Ibid. Lowther to Hardinge, 5.12.08. Pte. Ibid. Lowther to Grey, 24.11.08. No.800.

19 November, "I should have summed up the relations of Europe and Turkey by the word Despair. It has been one of the most wonderful and beneficent changes in history."¹ Lowther assured Grey that this speech would be "much appreciated" in Ottoman circles. But the highly complimentary public speeches did not really represent the policy or opinion of the British Government who displayed more realism with the many criticisms and doubts of their diplomatic correspondence.²

Lowther, reporting regularly on the internal situation, welcomed the appointment of Hilmi and Manyasizade Refik as Ministers of Interior and Justice. He hoped that they would strengthen the Cabinet and act as mediators between the CUP and the public. But was quite disappointed that the "real Committee" remained in utmost mystery.³ He saw the CUP as the originators of the intrigues against Kiamil, and in his eyes were thus discredited. According to his information the CUP was divided into three: "a group playing for its own hand, another, the honest one, supporting Kiamil, and third of somewhat violent socialistic tendencies."⁴

By December Lowther saw the first signs of a German recovery at Constantinople, for Germany did not share the Ottoman odium incurred by Austria. The reason was that Marschall regarded the Austrian annexation as "improper", although he had criticised the Ottoman boycott on Austrian goods. Lowther also detected "some voices" against Germany in connection with the heavy burden imposed on the Ottomans by the Baghdad Railway Convention. Alas, these voices had been

¹ Asquith spoke similarly on the 19th. The Cambridge History of British Foreign Policy, III, p.402. P. Knaplund, Speeches on Foreign Policy, 1904-1914. (London, 1931) pp.107-8.

² Lowther to Grey, 24.11.08. Pte. LP.

³ Lowther to Grey, 2.12.08, No.818.

⁴ Lowther to Hardinge, 8.12.08, Pte. LP.

silenced and Lowther could only explain the rise of German influence as the result of the outstanding personality of Marschall, "the central figure amongst the Ambassadors." Another reason was the pro-German inclinations of many Ottoman officers. He speculated further that the strained relations with Austria and Bulgaria and, to a lesser extent with Greece, might have caused the Young Turks to ask themselves whether it might not be better to keep Germany's friendship. At a loss to find explanations to Germany's recovery at Constantinople, Mallet suggested bribery had probably been used, and Hardinge thought that Lowther's explanation was hardly sufficient.¹ A few days later Lowther claimed that Germany, by supporting Austria intended to deal a blow at Kiamil's pro-British Cabinet, and force Ferid Pasha's return to power.² At that time the organs of the CUP "under the inspiration of the German Embassy", violently attacked Kiamil. The whole matter was further complicated when the Balkan Committee interfered in internal Ottoman politics. The CUP used the Balkan Committee as a stick with which to beat Kiamil. They forced him to entertain the Committee Delegation, treating his house as a "Committee restaurant".³ The behaviour of the Balkan Committee aroused Grey's irritation. He warned Evans of the Balkan Committee, to be "very careful not to be mixed up in any internal differences of opinion amongst the Young Turks and particularly not in any intrigues in movements adverse to Kiamil."⁴ Lowther, for his part, warned Buxton, a leading member of the Committee, that Ottoman politicians were using his name for their own purposes. Buxton had to deny publicly,

¹ Lowther to Grey, 6.12.08, No.835. Minutes, 14.12.08.

² Lowther to Grey, 13.12.08, No.855. Lowther to Hardinge, 10.3.09. Pte.LP.

³ Same to same, 12.12.08, tel.No. 415. Same to same, 13.12.08, No.855.

⁴ Lowther to Grey, 12.12.08, tel.No.415, Minute by Grey.

that he had any official connection with the British Government. On the eve of the opening of the Ottoman Parliament Lowther made clear to the Foreign Office his lack of sympathy for the Young Turks, especially the "chauvinists". The Foreign Office could diminish, according to Lowther, the influence of the CUP by withholding from the new regime any large sum of money for: "if there is plenty of money going I fear the most violent ones will come to the front".¹ Indeed, this was an entire volte face on his part since a month earlier he expected more substantial and speedier financial aid than the French and Germans had offered.²

Kiamil's position was now precarious indeed. Lowther foresaw that his only hope was that the deputies from Arabia and Anatolia, although elected under the auspices of the CUP, would change their loyalty, since they were not in real sympathy with the CUP.³

Lowther was in despair over the loyalty of the Bulgarian element inside the Empire. This resulted from the trickeries used by the CUP during the elections to the Ottoman Parliament.⁴ Then Lowther's criticism of the CUP had mounted to such an extent that he hoped that Kiamil would win in the coming struggle with the CUP: "The Committee was well enough when we were going through a transitory state but it has no *raison d'être* ... it is a secret society responsible to none". Again he recommended the exercise of financial control over the new regime, including control by the Debt Council over the Budget, though he knew that the CUP would not like it. The control should be also used in the

¹ Same to same, 9.12.08, No.851. Same to same, 11.12.08, No.854. Same to same, 16.12.08. Pte. Bertie, however, favoured pecuniary assistance to the new regime, otherwise they would apply to Germany. Bertie to Hardinge, 4.11.08. Pte. BP,180. Hardinge replied that Cassel would advance money to the Porte and added: "He of course, has asked, like all Jews, for his quid pro quo". Hardinge to Bertie, 5.11.08. Pte. Ibid. Hardinge, Old Diplomacy (London, 1947), p.165.

² Lowther to Hardinge, 10.11.08. Pte. LP. Hardinge to Lowther, 17.11.08. Pte. Ibid.

³ Lowther to Grey, 13.12.08, No.855.

⁴ Lowther to Grey, 15.12.08, No.862.

event of an increase of the Customs duties, and with regard to the forthcoming loan. But he preferred to abstain for the moment from offering more advice to Kiamil, since the latter had already been accused of leaning too much upon Britain.¹

The struggle for power between the GUP and Kiamil did not make matters easier for Britain. The GUP accused Kiamil of relying too "implicitly" on Britain, whilst itself making a "great fuss" over the Balkan Committee delegation in the belief that they occupied an important position in Britain.² Lowther himself made it clear that he was getting "rather sick of the Committee and wish them to disappear. They have given us a lot of trouble to keep old Kiamil on his, at one time, rather rickety seat and there are a lot of irresponsible young gentlemen amongst them."³ Less than a fortnight after the opening of the Parliament, Lowther criticised A. Riza, its president, for his attempt to muzzle the opposition.⁴ The Ambassador was, however, shocked to find that Riza felt that the GUP had to continue to direct and control the Government. "I fear that we may at any moment be faced with a spirit of great chauvinism on the part of the section of the Committee that control the situation." In view of the growing danger from the GUP Lowther could see only one way to keep Kiamil in office: "to let it be made clear to them that those who have money to lend will not do so unless the Government is in the hand of men of experience in whom some reliance can be placed." Nonetheless he thought that Riza could restrain the extremists, though he himself had still to be regarded as hopeless.⁵

¹ Same to same, 22.12.08. Pte.LP.

² Lowther to Grey, 22.12.08. Pte.LP. Same to same, 29.12.08, No.894. FO/371/760.

³ Same to same, 20.12.08. Pte.LP.

⁴ Same to same, 28.12.08. No.897.

⁵ Same to same, 29.12.08. Pte.LP.

The Foreign Office too continued to criticise the Young Turks. "I entirely share your view," Hardinge wrote to Lowther, "that it is desirable that this Young Turk Committee should disappear in the near future, otherwise they will in course of time deteriorate, and assume precisely the same position as that held previously by the Palace camarilla."¹ It should not be assumed that the Foreign Office was totally objective, while the Embassy lacked objectivity²; in fact, London no less than Constantinople, was staffed mainly with anti-Ottoman officials who shared the prejudices of the well-entrenched Gladstonian school.

The Young Turks were criticised not only by the Foreign Office and the Embassy, but also by an independent figure like Block, who had considered himself a pro-Young Turk from the beginning. He foresaw that the "spirit of Chauvinism" amidst the CUP would be detrimental to the work of the Public Debt Council. Block as a representative of the Council, saw the problem of Ottoman finances as purely economic: "We believe that in the long run the Government will appreciate the services rendered."³ The Foreign Office, however, was encouraged by Cassel's view which was not at all pessimistic, as Block's was, concerning the condition of Ottoman finances.⁴

Whilst the Foreign Office was more concerned with the external position of the new regime, the Embassy closely watched the internal situation. Fitzmaurice in assessing the balance of the new regime indicated that its pro-British sympathies facilitated Gorst's task in dealing with the Egyptian nationalists⁵ and favourably impressed

¹ Hardinge to Lowther, 29.12.08. Pte.Ibid.

² Cf. F. Ahmad, "Great Britain's Relations with the Young Turks, 1908-1914." Middle Eastern Studies (1966), p.309.

³ Block to Lowther, 2.1.09 in: Lowther to Grey, 4.1.09, No.6, conf.

⁴ Hardinge to Lowther, 29.12.08. Pte.LP.

⁵ Gorst, however, was quite confident as to his ability to deal successfully with the situation in Egypt. See: Gorst to Grey, 18.10.08. Pte. GP,47.

the Indian Moslems. Nevertheless, he sharply criticised the CUP for its undemocratic behaviour to the Christians during the elections, and pointed out that it was "gradually" assuming the despotic methods of the Hamidian regime. He was satisfied in the loss of strength of the CUP and the growth of Kiamil's in the Parliament: "For the existence of an irresponsible and secret body claiming executive and administrative powers side by side with the Porte and Parliament would have produced an impossible state of things." The Chief Dragoman seemed to be content with the position Britain had achieved with the new regime. The foundation of this favourable position was Kiamil's pro-British attitude. As to material benefits it was understood that the old system of concession-hunting could not be continued, but Fitzmaurice was sure that British trade could be extended by a policy of "carefully guiding and nurse [sic] the pro-English sentiments of the Turks."¹

The most pessimistic view which reached the Foreign Office at that time did not come from the Embassy at Constantinople, but from a War Office official, Lieut.-Col. F.R. Maunsell, a former Military Attaché to the Porte. He recommended the formation of a greater Bulgaria and an independent Albania, as bulwarks against the Austro-German Drang nach Osten. On the new regime he was sharply critical: "I am afraid from what I have seen that he [the Turk] is hopeless, and that no real reform is intended. It is the same old Turk, although he has changed his coat, and made an effort to smarten himself up." Tilley, naturally accepted Maunsell's report quite enthusiastically. Hardinge sounded much less anti-Ottoman: "Happily this development will take some little time before it creates another Balkan question."²

At this time the new regime showed its concern over the

¹Fitzmaurice to Tyrrell, 11.1.09. Pte. BD.V. No.211. Ed.Add.

²Maunsell's report in: Major Symonds to Tilley, 19.1.09. Minutes 20.1. FO/371/766/2681.

Bulgarian element in the Empire. The Porte had intended to insist that the Exarch reside in Sofia rather than Constantinople. If he did continue to reside in the Ottoman capital, he should become an Ottoman subject. Mallet regarded this Ottoman demand as "very reasonable." But Hardinge thought that if the Exarch moved to Sofia, the Porte would have no further control over him, and this would be a "bad example" to the Greek Patriarch.¹

On 13 January Kiamil won a unanimous vote of confidence in the Chamber. Lowther regarded it as a severe blow to the CUP. The rapprochement with Austria and the first signs that Bulgaria too would come forward with a new offer, also strengthened the position of the Grand Vizier. Lowther saw it as a contribution to the stabilization of the Empire, but he did not underrate the CUP's opposition. He renewed his pressure upon the Foreign Office to offer Kiamil the G.C.B., since "he can never be stronger than today."² Inside the Foreign Office Tilley regarded Kiamil's victory as important and commented that Lowther regarded the Young Turks with great disfavour. Hardinge also accepted Lowther's interpretation and concluded that the sooner the CUP disappeared the better it would be for the new regime.³

Block, although he openly supported the new regime, recommended, like Lowther, that money should be given to the Porte only after the financial reform had taken place. "Whether under a despotic or constitutional regime", Block wrote to Hardinge, "the Turk is always the same as regards money. As long as he has money he will spend it without care for the morrow and still listen to no advice."⁴ On the

¹Lowther to Grey, 11.1.09, No.18. Minutes, Ibid., 18.1.

²Lowther to Grey, 14.1.09, No.29. Same to same, 14.1.09, Pte.tel.

³Ibid. Minutes, FO/371/760.

⁴Block to Hardinge, 13.1.09. Pte. FO/371/762.

most important question of all, that of general reform, Britain's attitude remained unchanged. When Rifaat complained of outrages by Bulgarian soldiers against Moslems, Mallet commented rather indignantly: "I hope the Porte will not continue to complain to us about this sort of thing. Their remedy is good government and efficient gendarmerie."¹

Whilst Tilley envisaged the possibility of the end of the entire Ottoman Empire, Lowther while remaining an enemy of the Young Turks, supported Kiamil's policies. When Lowther doubted Bulgaria's capacity for war since she was even unable to raise the 100 million fr. for compensation for the Porte, Tilley remarked: "I do not think there is anything in this. A nation may very well go to war in such circumstances and yet not be able to find money for compensation. I trust that Sir G. Lowther is not encouraging the Turks over much: after all he represents England and not Turkey."² Hardinge momentarily suspected Lowther as too pro-Ottoman, since he reported on the Ottoman military preparations only after they had been completed.³ But basically Britain's friendship with Kiamil's Government was unhurt and Kiamil spoke favourably of it in the Ottoman Chamber.⁴ Hardinge reacted enthusiastically: "The Turkish Government are now much firmer in the saddle and Kiamil Pasha's speech has been an extraordinary success. It really was a very statesmanlike pronouncement"⁵; Lowther reported moreover, that the CUP had now "practically ceased to exist as an executive body", although its influence continued to be felt in reforms and

¹ Rifaat to Hardinge, 19.1.09. Memo. minute. 20.1. FO/371/765/2636.

² Lowther to Grey, 24.1.09. tel. No.18. Minute, 25.1. FO/371/748.

³ Same to same, 19.1.09, No.37. Minute.

⁴ Same to same, 19.1.09, No.40.

⁵ Hardinge to Bryce, 15.1.09. Pte. HP,17.

nominations.¹ Nevertheless, Britain was firm in rejecting another suggestion for an alliance made by the Ottoman Ambassador in Berlin. "A friendly Turkey", wrote Hardinge, "is a much more convenient situation for us than an allied Turkey."² Six months after the Revolution and less than a fortnight after Kiamil's victory in Parliament, Lowther sent a gloomy summary of the achievements of the new regime. Although the most crying abuses were rectified, no change had occurred in "the nature of the Turk", nor any serious amelioration in the administration. Moreover, the law was heeded now less than under the old regime. He admitted that external complications impeded the execution of internal reform, and that Parliament was sitting only for a short time; still he was disappointed that he could not point to any constructive work. He criticised the Government for its failure to solve internal problems.³ Tilley quickly noted the marked change in Lowther's attitude towards the new regime. He considered it "startling" to receive such a report from Lowther who had hitherto been "somewhat optimistic". He did not deny that he himself had always been pessimistic about the possibility of reform, "but any hopes on that subject would be dashed by this report." He advised that "we should at least be able in future to wash our hands of the internal affairs of Turkey, at any rate until something very startling happened, but this will scarcely be possible if we are to attach our consent to the increase all manner of guarantees for the proper expenditure of the revenue. That the Turks will waste their

¹ Lowther to Grey, 20.1.09, No.43.

² Hardinge to Goschen, 26.1.09. Pte. HP, 17.

³ Lowther to Grey, 25.1.09. No.50. FO/371/749. Compare with an interesting criticism by Munir Pasha. Bertie to Grey, 11.1.09. Pte. BP, 180.

money is more than likely, but how are we to prevent them except by 'meddling' ? ... we have taken such a definite line in preparing to treat Turkey in future as a civilized state that we can hardly draw back now we must take the risk of their coming to grief... progress is scarcely what one would expect of Moslems, least of all of Turkish Moslems."¹ Mallet, however, was inclined to adopt the 'meddling' policy again. He opposed the suggestion to increase the Customs as this might be utilized as a guarantee for the expenditure for the Baghdad Railway. Thus an understanding concerning them was essential: "without an understanding about the Baghdad Railway, we should really be fighting the Turkish Battle, but they might not thank us all the same". He agreed with Lowther that the abolition of the Capitulations must depend on the establishment of good government.²

Tilley meanwhile commented sharply on a somewhat optimistic report from the Board of Trade, which had compared the regeneration of the Ottoman Empire to that of Japan. While Japan proved capable of reform the new regime at Constantinople had yet to prove its capacity. In fact, the achievements of the new regime were restricted to the abolition of the autocracy and the spy system, but beyond this "no real change is perceptible in the internal administration." He rejected the system of the imposition of guarantees agreeing with the Report that Britain should confine herself to an ordinary commercial treaty with import duties not exceeding 20% ad valorem with the exception of cotton and heavy woollen goods no more than 10%; and that no fresh monopolies should be allowed without Britain's consent.³

¹ Lowther to Grey, 25.1.09. No.50. FO/371/749. Minute by Tilley, 1.2.09.

² Ibid., minute by Mallet. 1.2.09.

³ Board of Trade to Foreign Office. Secret and Pressing. 3.2.09. Minutes, 4.2. FO/371/749.

On 10 February the struggle between the Liberal Unionists and the CUP reached a climax when Kiamil replaced the Ministers of War and Marine with his own nominees. Lowther foresaw the possibility of the Sultan's deposition should Kiamil fall.¹ London reacted ominously. This was "evidently serious" and "bad news".² Kiamil's subsequent resignation was a "serious blow". Mallet thought that only a victory in foreign policy such as getting rid of the war indemnity to Russia could save Kiamil but the British could hardly say this to Izvolsky.³ Lowther reported that only 8 members voted in Kiamil's favour, since all the Christian deputies and his other supporters abstained, "being alarmed by the tone of the Committee, which was strongly anti-religious and nationalist".⁴

Looking back on Kiamil's resignation Tilley described it as a "great blow" to British influence. He believed that the resignation affected the cause of progress in the Empire since "his [Kiamil's] energy, his honesty, his strength of character, and his tenacity of purpose were qualities which are not often found in Turks (he is himself a Jew by origin)".⁵ No better example could be given to the extent of the Turcophobia which prevailed in the FO.

The Young Turks were careful not to lose Britain's support at that crucial time. This was probably the reason why on the very day of Kiamil's resignation, they sent a deputation to the British Embassy to explain that they had opposed Kiamil's rule on constitutional grounds alone. Only a Ministry which pursued a policy of friendship towards Britain would receive their support. Lowther for his part was little impressed. On the contrary, the Parliamentary proceedings of 14 February convinced him that the CUP would establish

¹ Lowther to Grey, 11.2.09. tel.No.47. Same to same, 12.2.09, tel.

² No.48. Same to same, 11.2.09. No.93.

³ Same to same, 11.2.09, tel.No.48. Minutes by Tilley & Grey, FO/371/760

⁴ Same to same, 12.12.09, tel.No.49. Minutes.

⁵ Same to same, 15.2.09, No.102.

a despotism based on "Turkish, as opposed to non-Turkish nationalist aspirations." He saw Kiamil's reshuffle of 10 February as an attempt to check nationalist aspirations: all this was again "bad news" to Grey.¹

The new Grand Vizier, Hilmi Pasha, was quick to promise Lowther that he would continue the policy of friendship towards Britain since he was close to English ideas and sentiments. Rifaat, the Ambassador to London, had been offered the post of Minister for Foreign Affairs in order to demonstrate this friendship: Lowther's reply to Hilmi only repeated the Foreign Office's line: "as long as his Government worked to effect reforms he could rely on our sympathy and moral support." Tilley found it necessary to remind that British sympathy and moral support depended entirely on the Ottomans themselves.² Grey too found it necessary to inform the Russians that "moral support and sympathy" had only been promised to Hilmi for a policy of reform emanating from the Porte.³ Still, the Foreign Office rejected the doubts of the Servian Minister for Foreign Affairs about the stability of the new regime.⁴ Following the same idea the British Government also rejected the Russian plan to receive Ferdinand as a King in St. Petersburg, as it would create a "deplorable impression" at Constantinople.⁵

⁵ Contd. from previous page

Memorandum respecting the Turkish Revolution & its consequences, by J.A.C. Tilley, 1.3.09. FO/421/250/13516. On Kiamil's Jewish extraction see: H. Lamb, in: Annual Report for Turkey for the Year 1906.

BD.V. p.20.

¹ Lowther to Grey, 14.2.09, tel.No.51. Minutes, Cf.Ahmad,p.38 n.1.

² Lowther to Grey, 15.2.09, No.53. Same to same, 15.2.09. No.104. Similarly, both the Foreign Office and Lowther could hardly take very seriously the suggestion of the British Consul-General at Meshed that a "regenerate Turk" should go to Afghanistan to educate the ruling class there since he had yet to prove his own regeneration. Lowther pointed out the probable opposition of the Indian Government and to the danger of the renewal of Pan-Islam under the auspices of the CUP. P.M. Sykes to Barclay, 7.1.09. Barclay to Grey, 26.1.09. No.13. FO/371/767. Minutes, 15.2. Lowther to Grey, 1.3.09. No.143.

Lowther, however, was unhappy about Hilmi's appointment as Grand Vizier. "We may take it for granted that this Government is compelled to the bidding of the Committee. Hilmi is able and active, but I fear quite untrustworthy." As power was now in fact in the Young Turks' hands, Lowther thought that the Cretan question would be the first to arise "as the Committee... represents purely Turkish versus Ottoman interests." He suspected that the new Cabinet would not listen to Britain as Kiamil's had as it was dominated by the CUP, who were leading the country to a complete military despotism, which already existed in a "very thinly" concealed form. But he pessimistically predicted that Russia, to judge by Zimoviev's hatred of the CUP, would be pleased to see the deterioration of the new regime. Naturally Marschall, a great admirer of Hilmi, would be able to take advantage of the new situation.¹

Lowther did not hesitate to tell Riza, now the President of the Ottoman Chamber, on 18 February that the existence of the "anonymous Society" (the CUP) was not in accordance with the Constitution. He was not "patronizing" the Young Turks², since he, on the contrary, encouraged them to come into the open and to take governmental responsibility instead of dictating from behind the

³Contd. from previous page
Grey to Nicolson, 16.2.09. No.66.

⁴Whitehead to Grey, 16.2.09. No.19. conf. Minute by Mallet, 22.2. FO/371/751.

⁵Nicolson to Grey, 19.2.09, tel.No.85. Minutes. BD.V. No.584. Same to same, 19.2.09. No.122. Grey to Nicolson, 19.2.09, No.210. Lowther to Grey, 20.2.09, No.59.

¹Lowther to Grey, 16.2.09. Pte.LF.

²F. Ahmad, The Young Turks, p.38.

scenes. Lowther's language to Riza was fully supported by the Foreign Office.¹

Even Block, who was now, after Kiamil's resignation, quite worried as to the chances of the new regime. He indicated that the resignation of Kiamil had been "hardly constitutional" as it was engineered by the CUP's orders. Hilmi's appointment did not please him as he would have to obey the CUP's orders since he ought his first appointment in Kiamil's Cabinet to the CUP. Indeed, Block was not far from Lowther's opinion when he wrote to Hardinge that he was disturbed by the "indiscipline" in the army, navy and the civil administration. This, he added, might bring disturbances with since the Young Turks' army officers were meddling in the administration being "discontented" at their inability to take office. He suggested therefore the same remedy as Lowther had, Britain's consent to the Customs increase by 4% should be conditioned on the improvement of the financial administration, otherwise "Stop supplies; that is the only way."²

The appointment as Grand Vizier of Hilmi, seen both in the Embassy and in the Foreign Office as a tool of the CUP, began a new period in British policy towards the new regime. They saw Rifaat's appointment as Minister for Foreign Affairs as the only safeguard for the much doubted British orientation of the new Cabinet, though doubted his capacity to cope with the CUP. Hardinge moreover agreed with Lowther that the new regime was "gradually tending to a military despotism of a nationalist and chauvinistic character. In that case, we shall have to quietly bide our time until a more moderate system of

¹Lowther to Grey, 19.2.09, No.110. Minutes by Hardinge and Grey, 24.2. FO/371/761.

²Block to Hardinge, 17.2.09. Pte. HP, 192.

government is reintroduced."¹ "The whole situation seems to be very critical," he told Block, "as it is impossible for a country to be properly governed by an occult camarilla."² Nevertheless, Britain still hoped that the Young Turks would bring about some reform; they had, after all, deposed the Palace regime: "In the meantime we must watch events, help the Turks where we can, and show ourselves sympathetic". But these hopes were accompanied by some specific misgivings on whether the recently appointed Crawford, the Customs Adviser, or Admiral Gamble, the Naval Adviser, could achieve anything effective. Thus the British Government found itself in a new dilemma, which had been created by the hasty and somewhat irresponsible statements of encouragement that had been made immediately after the declaration of the Constitution. The Young Turks were far from being a success, but Britain found herself still committed by these statements. Hardinge described this dilemma to Block, but not to Lowther, possibly because the Ambassador had ammunition enough for his criticism: "The administration seems to be as bad, if not worse, than before, and yet the Turks are now approaching the Powers with a view to raising the Customs dues to 15%. They would at the time, I imagine, resent all control." He hoped that Cassel would gain the predominant position at Constantinople over the French and German financiers. Thus with hope for a Bulgaro-Russian-Ottoman settlement a satisfactory solution at least to the external and financial problems might be attained. The Foreign Office was as sceptical as Lowther on the internal situation, but decidedly more optimistic as to Russian goodwill towards the new regime. Hardinge argued that Zinoviev did not represent the views of his government.³

¹ Hardinge to Lowther, 23.2.09. Pte. LP. Block to Hardinge, 17.2.09. Pte.

² Hardinge to Block, 23.2.09. Pte. HP, 17. op.cit.

³ Hardinge to Lowther, 23.2.09. Pte. HP, 17. Hardinge to Buchanan, 23.2.09. Pte. ibid., Hardinge to Cartwright, 23.2.09. Pte. ibid., Hardinge to Goschen, 23.2.09. Pte., ibid.

Lowther criticised the Young Turks for being able to make a successful impression on the Balkan Committee alone and not on the Ottoman public. He strongly resented the support given to the CUP by a large section of the Ottoman press which had condemned Kiamil as a "blood-stained despot by the side of whom ... Augustus, Charles I, or even President Castro [President of Venezuela, 1899-1908] would figure as the saviours of their countries' liberties."¹ Confusion had resulted from the CUP's rule which in face of the opposition of 90% of the country had been obtained by "threats and revolvers".² The overwhelming opposition to the CUP was represented in the Ottoman Chamber only by 50 votes, a "ridiculous situation". Lowther informed London that he had been "a little cold" to the CUP and believed that this had had a good effect on them as they were aware that British support was essential. "On the slightest sign of their doing good work," he wrote, "I shall be more cordial." He was entirely disappointed with the Young Turks, accusing them of restoring the old regime and he regretted the predominance of the "violent" element in the CUP.³ This sort of criticism became habitual in Lowther's letters as the CUP increasingly entrenched itself in both the Porte and Parliament. The situation was bad and he only wondered that it did not get worse. Hilmi was on the other hand doing his best to face up to the CUP but was not strong enough to fight them. Lowther showed complete mistrust in the CUP's promises to quit after the Parliamentary regime was firmly established. The lack of determined opposition was a source of disappointment to Lowther: "All agree that things are going badly, but none of them have the courage to stand up against the Société anonyme and their revolver methods." Nor did Lowther believe that there was any

¹ Lowther to Grey, 26.2.09. No.129. FO/371/761.

² Lowther to Corst, 26.2.09, Pte. LP.

³ Lowther to Hardinge, 2.3.09. Pte. LP.

point in keeping the gendarmerie officers in Macedonia. With such a situation even Cassel was somewhat discouraged. Lowther nonetheless had retained some hope for an improvement in the situation.¹ On 16 March Lowther seemed to abandon the pessimism which he had adopted only a few days earlier. Now he could find "some" good men amongst the CUP, with whom he thought it was "indispensable" to be on good terms, though he did not change his mind that the CUP ought to disappear. He was much less critical on the foreign policy of the new regime.²

On 23 March Hardinge, for the first time, made it quite clear to Lowther that British policy had now changed. Admitting that the situation at Constantinople was "disheartening" he privately warned the Ambassador: "you ought to be very careful not to show in any way that our feelings have changed towards the new regime, and not to do anything that might be interpreted in that sense." Caution was momentarily advised, for: "It is probable that this Committee will disappear in the not far distant future, and then our former position will undoubtedly be restored."³ Hardinge did not mean to dissociate himself from Lowther's scathing criticism, but to warn him against giving the Ottomans any indication that Britain had indeed changed her policy.

Buxton had meanwhile visited Mallet at the Foreign Office on 7 March and had admitted that the situation was unconstitutional. But he had explained his support of the Young Turks as stemming from the conviction that "if they disappeared, all driving force would disappear with them and the country sink back into its old condition before the Revolution." He had defended the CUP's remaining behind

¹ Same to same, 10.3.09. Pte. ibid.

² Lowther to Grey, 16.3.09. Pte. LP. Hardinge to Buchanan, 23.3.09. HP, 17.

³ Hardinge to Lowther, 23.3.09. Pte. LP.

the scenes as most of them were only just over twenty years of age. More important had been his condemnation of Lowther's antipathy to the Young Turks, which could well alienate CUP's sympathy towards Britain.¹

While Lowther could criticise the CUP for its unconstitutional methods, his Military Attaché reported on the state of "indiscipline" among the army officers, arising from their membership of the CUP. They had, moreover, been responsible for Kiamil's fall, since many of them had come to the Chamber "influencing and apparently terrorizing" the Deputies. He warned that unless the "authorities" absolutely forbade military interference in politics, the country would soon be subject to a military coup d'état.²

The Foreign Office was even more anti-Ottoman than the Embassy, largely because of the influence of one man - Tilley. Lowther had a similar opinion, but he did not use Tilley's strong terms. Tilley could not believe that Hilmi was able to perform "the miracle required to cure the 'sick man'." He felt that Christians would never find equality in the Ottoman Empire. Not only did he agree with Lowther that the "Turks have not ceased to be Turks", but also believed the new type of "Turk" could be "worse than the former": "what seems to me sad is that the Turk of the future who has lost his sense of superiority will lose his personal dignity, that if he is to remain on equal terms with the Christian he is likely to vie with him in dishonesty, and that, in fact the Turk whom we are now hoping to create will not be the same Turk whose distinction has hitherto so often led travellers to think there was something to be said for his cause."³ Portentous as the trends were, no one in the Foreign Office

¹ Lowther to Grey, 26.2.09, No.129. Minutes by Tilley & Mallet, 8.3.

² Col. Surtees to Lowther, 27.2.09, No.13, in: Lowther to Grey, 1.3.09. No.141.

³ Memorandum by Tilley, The Turkish Revolution and its Consequences, 1.3.09, op.cit.

or in the Embassy dared foresee the end of the Ottoman Empire in Europe, except Tilley: "If they are going to become a regenerate race they will, I venture to think, do so after, and not before, their departure from Europe."¹

Tilley had already made his views on the future of the Ottoman Empire clear, but Kiamil's fall now gave new impetus to his opinions. He was sure that the "Turkish" element was bound to lose its position, since it was both intellectually and numerically inferior, and "if it goes under is likely to lose such virtues as it possesses, particularly its dignity and what will be most to the fore will be the bad qualities of the Arabs, Greeks and Armenians." As a junior official of the Foreign Office, Tilley's influence was naturally limited, but his weight was enhanced by his first hand and comparatively recent knowledge of the Ottoman Empire. It was still felt that the new regime deserved a longer period to try its chance. Hardinge rejected the possibility of an imminent disintegration: "I am not so despondent of the future as Mr. Tilley."² However, the estrangement of Britain from the new regime grew slowly but steadily.

The British attitude to the financial Commission for Macedonia serves as a good indicator for their policy. They expressed strong opposition to the idea of its dissolution although it was at the time a symbol of the anti-Ottoman policy. Britain felt strongly that it should not be abolished before an efficient replacement was established.³ Her answer indicated the growing mistrust in the newly established Young Turk regime.

Not less significant was the concern among the British authorities in Egypt and in London at the CUP's clamouring for an Ottoman High

¹ Cartwright to Grey, 27.2.09, No.29. Minutes. BD.V. No.622.

² Lowther to Grey, 28.2.09, No.139. Minute by Tilley, 8.3. FC/371/761. Tilley's memo, op.cit., minute by Hardinge, 10.4.

³ Grey to Lowther, 11.3.09, tel.No.168. GP. 79.

Commissioner in Egypt. "I consider", Gorst wrote to Grey "that it would be much better policy to grasp the bull by the horns now." Lowther pressed hard on Hilmi not to send even a figurehead, but Hilmi could promise nothing since it was a matter of dignity. A. Riza, however, declined it on the ground that it was a sinecure. This did not prevent Lowther from demanding the abolition of the restrictions on Egypt from raising loans without the Porte's permission, another remnant of Ottoman rule in Egypt.¹

Lowther now reported more favourably on the Young Turks, and suggested that "the time has come for this country to receive under the new regime some recognition for the new order of things, and to acquire at least her commercial liberty. The situation by which small States, such as Bulgaria and Servia, were able to make Commercial Treaties, while a similar right was denied to Turkey, was intolerable." The commercial liberty conceded by the Austrians should be supported by the Powers since it was "indispensable" for the regeneration of the Ottoman Empire. On the Capitulations he suggested that jurisdiction over foreign subjects should not be abrogated and he was supported on this point by Gabriel (Noradounghian) Effendi, Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs. Mallet, while ready to meet the Porte on the question of commercial liberty and to make concessions over Articles 23 and 61 of the Berlin Treaty, was anxious about the Porte's orientation in foreign policy: "they should have no excuse for throwing us over, for from every point of view it is important that Turkey should not be hostile. Germany would be quick to seize her advantage and we should have incurred the enmity of Austria and distrust of Bulgaria for nothing." On the Macedonian question Mallet repeated the "good government" cliché as the best safeguard against Bulgaria.

¹ Lowther to Grey, 16.3.09. Pte. LP. Gorst to Grey, 14.2.09. Pte. GP, 47.

Hardinge was less enthusiastic than both Lowther and Mallet. Every change in the Capitulations could be made only in conjunction with the Powers and as for British policy the wait-and-see policy ought to be continued, though he was inclined to abrogate Articles 23 and 61.¹

But Lowther also declined to suggest greater financial freedom to the new regime. He demanded a modification in the Baghdad Railway Convention before this freedom was given, as the Railway was at the time a more political and a strategic enterprise than an economic one.² The Ambassador suspected that without control the money would go on armaments. He rejected Hilmi's suggestion that the Financial Commission for Macedonia act in Constantinople, as they would be prevented from doing anything, for the case of the French adviser was an instructive one.³ Grey agreed that the old Commission be dissolved, but should be replaced by a new Commission.⁴

It was not until September 1909, however, that R.W. Graves, the British member of the Commission, stopped "controlling" the Macedonian finances and entered the Ottoman service as a member of the new commission for "organizing" the Ottoman finances.⁵ Lowther was again gloomy on the future of the new regime unless the CUP left the political scene. The most satisfactory solution would be if the "best" elements of the Committee came to the open and took part in governmental responsibility, while the "worst" elements disappeared. But this, he admitted, was impractical. The Government was already under the control of the CUP, he lamented. There was little evidence of a change

¹ Lowther to Grey, 22.3.09. No.204. conf. Minutes, 29.3.

² Same to same, 18.3.09. No.196.

³ Lowther to Hardinge, 24.3.09. Pte. LP. Lowther to Grey, 9.3.09. tel. No.75. Minutes. FO/371/762. Lowther to Grey, 23.3.09. tel.No.96.

⁴ Same to same, 29.3.09, No.101. Grey to Lowther, 30.3.09. No.214.

⁵ Lowther to Grey, 21.9.09. No.774. FO/371/763. Same to same, 25.9.09. No.784. On his experiences see: R.W. Graves, Storm Centres of the Near East, Personal Memories, 1879-1929 (London, 1933).

in this state of affairs. He was surprisingly optimistic on Britain's position at Constantinople, though his claim was based on public support rather than that of the Government: "I do not think it has in the least [changed] with the immense majority of the people... in spite of some unpleasant remarks on the part of the violent papers our position remains the same. Indeed I am on the best of terms with many members of the Committee and have kept my disapproval of their methods to myself."¹ But he later wrote, Britain's position was not an easy one as the "Turks" could not realise that the Anglo-Russian Entente was a fact, and the Russians were regarded by the "Turks" as their "natural" enemy.²

Both the Embassy and the Foreign Office hoped that the moderates would gain the upper hand, though they regretted that the present situation was "so shadowy". The intervention of the CUP and the army in politics, however, convinced Hardinge that "the best solution would be a military dictatorship for some time to come. It looks very much as though we were fast coming to that."³ Here, Hardinge was influenced by Block rather than by Lowther. But he did follow Lowther's view of Britain's position at Constantinople:

We may have to pass through a disagreeable period of one or two years, during which everybody's influence in Constantinople will be struggling for supremacy, while ours will occupy a back seat. Still, the fact that British influence is deeply ingrained in the sentiment of the Turkish population will ensure the eventual predominance of that influence.

¹ Lowther to Hardinge, 31.3.09. Pt. LP.

² Same to same, 6.4.09. Pte. Minute by Mallet, HP, 192.

³ Hardinge to Lowther, 6.4.09. Pte. ibid.

In the midst of growing difficulties from within the Ottoman Empire the Foreign Office measured its success by the achievements gained by the British advisers and financiers: Cassel, Crawford and Gamble. Hardinge promised his "heartly support" to Cassel as long as the National Bank preserved its predominant British character and hoped that Gamble and his staff would not give up because of the difficulties they were facing. As for Crawford, if in spite of his energy and ability, he failed, nobody else would be able to succeed.¹ Block was pessimistic over the ability of the new regime to cope with their financial problems. He suggested an extension of the Public Debt control in order to bring about a greater confidence in Ottoman finance. But the cry "Turkey for the Turks" was regarded by him as a "healthy sign of national resurrection."² Later on the CUP organ "Tanin" reminded him that the Public Debt should have been abolished as part of this "resurrection".³

¹ Hardinge to Block, 8.4.09. Pte. HP, 17.

² Block to the Council of Foreign Bondholders 5.4.09 in: Lowther to Grey, 8.4.09, No. 254. FO/371/762.

³ Lowther to Grey, 14.9.09, No. 742 (The "Tanin", 9.9), FO/371/763.

CHAPTER 3

FROM CRITICISM TO OPPOSITION: BRITISH POLICY AND INTERESTS FROM THE
COUNTER-REVOLUTION TO THE TRIPOLI WAR (APRIL 1909 - SEPTEMBER 1911)

A) The Repercussions of the Internal Upheaval: The Alienation
of the CUP

The Foreign Office's immediate interpretation of the counter-revolution was as a "Rebellion on the Turkish Army", although Lowther, who had proved more efficient than Barclay in July 1908, reported that the "movement" was not one against the Constitution, but was rather a religious outbreak against the CUP. On the same day Lowther mistakenly reported Kiamil's appointment as Grand Vizier. Parker probably correctly expressed the opinion of the Foreign Office when he commented that if Kiamil returned to power "all may yet be well". Mallet thought that Abdul-Hamid had regained power as a result of the struggle between the CUP and the Union Libérale.¹ Lowther was afraid that the new events might lead to a "violently chauvinistic attitude" and to serious disturbances in the provinces. He suggested that the Admiralty should send warships to Beirut, Smyrna and Salenice to protect British interests for he had little confidence in the new Grand Vizier, Tewfik, who was not strong enough to deal with a dangerous situation. Lowther, who had constantly criticised the new regime for failing to achieve any positive results, was quick to sum up the first day of the Counter Revolution as "a distinct defeat of the CUP and their ultra-liberal ideas, for which the country as a whole is not ripe. It also means a restoration of the Sultan and Caliph's prestige and authority, which

¹ Lowther to Gray, 13.4.09, tel. no.107. Minutes, 14.4 FO/371/770
Same to same, 14.4.09, tel. No.108. Same to same, 14.4.09, tel.
no. 112. Minutes. On the Counter-Revolution see: Lewis, *passim*,
Ahmad, *The Young Turks*, *passim*. For contemporary accounts:
W.M. Ramsay, *The Revolution in Constantinople and Turkey. A Diary*
(London, 1909). E.F. Knight, *op.cit.* both favourable to the CUP.
F.McCullagh, *The Fall of Abdul-Hamid* (London, 1910).

the CUP had practically annihilated."¹ Grey reiterated Britain's "hearty sympathy" for any government which worked for successful reform² and expressed satisfaction that Rifaat remained in the new Cabinet. But Mallet commenting on the coup, expressed his despair for the prospects of the continuation of Ottoman rule in Macedonia, as nothing could now prevent Bulgaria from seizing Macedonia.³

On 17 April Asquith publicly expressed the anxiety felt by Britain that the Counter-Revolution might mean the end of the Constitutional regime. A reactionary regime would lose Britain's sympathy. Grey spoke in the same spirit in the House of Commons, after Mallet had advised him to mention only Asquith's speech, because "it does not commit us to corrupt 'Young Turks'".⁴

By 20 April Hardinge could already foresee the deposition of the Sultan with the final triumph of the CUP and he did not conceal his antipathy towards the Young Turks:

It is, I think, unfortunate that the Committee should have had this opportunity of showing how predominant is their position. They badly wanted a knock, and I thought at one moment that they had got it. I expect that they will now be even more arbitrary in their actions than they were before.⁵

Lowther reported that the "violent" members of the Committee wished to depose the Sultan, although there was no direct evidence against him. He was sure that the bulk of the people were on the side of the Liberal Unionists, but these would have to give way to a long despotic period of rule by the CUP. "All this", he wrote on the

¹ Same to same, 14.4.09, tel. no. 111. Lowther to Hardinge, 14.4.09 Pte. LP. same to same, 14.4.09, no. 264.

² Grey to Lowther, 15.4.09, tel. no. 242.

³ Lowther to Grey, 16.4.09, tel. no. 120. Minutes.

⁴ Asquith addressed a public gathering in Glasgow, The Times, 19.4.09. Mallet's comment: FO/371/775/15783. Hansard, 22 April. vol.III col. 1655. Parliamentary Question by Mr. J.C. Wedgwood.

⁵ Hardinge to Lowther, 20.4.09. LP.

recent events, "leads me to the conviction that these people are hopeless and that reform is out of the question for this wretched country".¹

After Shevket Pasha crushed the Counter-Revolution on 24 April, Lowther expected the Army to suppress the Committee too "in the interests of the Empire and eventually let the army take its proper place and not that of a violent factor in politics". He also hoped that the CUP would not be insensitive to the German attempt to recover their influence after identifying themselves in the recent pact with the Sultan.²

Now, the Foreign Office was convinced that events at Constantinople were settling down quickly, and they decided to take the Young Turks more seriously. Hardinge found the defeat of the reactionary movement "unsatisfactory": "I hope, however, that the danger through which the party of reform has passed will in the end chasten the CUP." The Foreign Office could now swallow the deposition of the Sultan quite easily. There was no "sorrow" or "regret". Grey and Hardinge quickly forgot their former attempts to support Abdul-Hamid as a Constitutional monarch. Instead he now became for them the Sultan of "absolute rule", "corruption", and associated with the Armenian massacres of 1895 and the other failures of the Empire. Hardinge rejoiced that Abdul-Hamid failed to escape to Asia Minor where the "bulk of Anatolia" might have stood by him, and could bring with him a "terrible" civil war.³ Once more the Young Turks were

¹Lowther to Hardinge, 20.4.09. Pte. *ibid.*

²Lowther to Hardinge, 25.4.09. Pte. *ibid.*

³Hardinge to Goschen, 27.4.09. Pte.HP, 17. Hardinge to Villers, 29.4.09 Pte., *ibid.*, Hardinge to the King, 28.4.09 Pte., *ibid.*, 18.

deserving of respect since, as after July 1908, they were gathering around themselves "the best elements", no longer were they accused of "chauvinism". The former criticism of the Embassy and the Foreign Office, Grey discovered, was an exaggeration:

. . . It is clear that we have greatly underestimated the strength of the force at the disposal of the Committee . . . it seems clear to me that the best elements in Turkey are on their side, and we must back up those elements and be sympathetic to them. Whether the chance of really permanent reform is great or small, we must back the change as long as it exists . . . I think that during the last three or four months we have let ourselves slide too much into a critical attitude towards the Committee and the Young Turks . . . they have shown that there is real stuff in them, and we must be less critical and more sympathetic.

Grey realized that the ablest men were found in the Army, whose officers should place the work of administration in the hands of foreign advisers because of their own "weakness" in this field.¹

The new British optimism however, found its only exception in Goschen at Berlin: "The Turks ought to remember that from a Turkish point of view the old Sultan didn't do so badly as he held Europe at bay for 30 years and kept the remnant of Turkey together as few men would have done".²

In the light of this complete change in Britain's attitude towards the Young Turks, but in line with that optimism, Hardinge told Fitzmaurice, Lowther's "alter ego" as he was called in the Foreign Office, to "adopt a sympathetic attitude towards the Young Turks and be neither critical nor even impartial towards them. He should try to show them that we are friendly and sympathetic and wish to help them. That is our feeling here, and the only practical line of policy to follow. Our only hope for a reformed Turkey rests now with the Young Turks, and if they do not meet with sympathy and cannot lean on us they will soon learn to lean on some other Power,

¹Grey to Lowther, 30.4.09. Pte. BD.V. no. 219. Grey to Bertie, 30.4.09. Pte BP.180.

²Goschen to Hardinge, 1.5.09. Pte., HP.17.

and the splendid position which we had at Constantinople a few months ago will be lost."¹

Britain's attitude, which involved shelving her antipathy to the CUP, doubtless arose, because the victory of the Young Turks was too obvious to be ignored. Lamb, the Consul-General at Salonica, approved this attitude. He maintained that though Shevket was not a member of the CUP, the views of the 3rd Army were practically those of the extreme section of that body, and "it may fairly be anticipated that the victory of the one, will be followed by the triumph of the other."² Still Lowther could not admit that the revolutionary turmoil was settling down. Recent events were a result of the CUP's moving "too fast" for their numerous opponents. The 3rd Army coup had not brought stability to the confused situation. Lowther's only remedy was a military dictatorship, but this was not forthcoming. The only alternative remained the CUP as the sole organised body. They should now introduce one or two elder statesmen as a steadying influence on their Government. Nevertheless restraint was the essence of British policy: "I think our game for the present is to maintain an expectant attitude and not to rush into the arms of any group who happen to be at the top of the wave for the moment." The Young Turks were now inclined to rely too much on their supporters in Macedonia and to forget the existence of Asia Minor. The Kurds' and Armenians' militancy was a further menace and he could only conclude that "many troubles" were to come.³

The British meanwhile sought to demonstrate their renewed sympathy with the new regime. On 6 May Grey told the Ottoman Charge that the "quietness of our press in face of the massacre at Adana was

¹Hardinge to Lowther, 1.5.09. Pte. LP.

²Lamb to Lowther, 21.4.09. no. 51 in: Lowther to Grey, 28.4.09, no.303

³Lowther to Grey, 5.5.09. Pte.GP.79

was a remarkable evidence of confidence in the new regime." But in fact this attitude reflected the Foreign Office's new policy to leave the Armenians at the Porte's mercy. Lowther also showed a certain satisfaction on the CUP's decision to come gradually into the open and to appoint Musteshars in each branch of the administration, after taking Shevket's advice not to assume full control.¹

Lowther in fact ignored the Foreign Office's call for a new line. The successful counter-coup marked the end of the Ottoman period and started the phase of the "Turk" predominance. By this, he meant the secular idea of the "Turk" as opposed to the religious one, since to the masses it appeared that the Young Turks were "Frankifying Islam". One great drawback was the absence of a middle class to supply the administration with officials. This meant that the Army had to fill the gap, and that might bring with it German influence. As some of the most energetic members of the CUP were Army officers, and therefore imbued with German influence, Lowther suggested that Britain should be sympathetic to the civilian element of the CUP. He tried to keep in contact with the more moderate element, but shrunk from any connections with the "extremist and the Salonica Jew" epitomized in Carasso. He was more satisfied with the positive effect of the Revolution on Egypt and India, the prospects of Willcocks' scheme for Mesopotamia and Crawford's success in the Customs. As for the Young Turks' attitude towards the European

¹ Grey to Lowther, 13.5.09 no.145 FO/371/771. Hardinge wrote to Lowther: "It is of no use for us to make ourselves unpopular over a thing [the Armenians] that we cannot prevent; but our instructions to you are necessary for Bluebook purposes, if for nothing else."

Lowther to Hardinge, 12.5.09. Pte., op.cit., Hardinge to Lowther, 18.5.09. Pte. LP. Cardushian to the Foreign Office, 5.6.09, FO/371/775, (minute by Mallet). Lowther to Grey, 30.6.09, no. 507, Minutes, same to same, 13.7.09, tel. no. 236. Minutes, Same to same, 13.10.09. no. 847. Minutes 2 5.10.

alliance, Lowther appeared pessimistic: "It would now seem as if the Committee has made up its mind no matter how much they dislike and distrust Germany and Austria to rely on their support as a counterpoise against Russia and Bulgaria."¹

Lowther's main target for criticism was the CUP leadership, consisting of "Salonica Christians, Jews, and freemasons." As this was contrary to the optimistic mood in the Foreign Office, Hardinge was moved to comment that: "Sir G. Lowther seems depressed by what has taken place, I should like to see signs in him of a more hopeful spirit."²

The Foreign Office probably found more encouragement from people like Crawford who, contrary to Lowther, did not expect European institutions to be successful in the Ottoman Empire. Crawford was ready, like Block, to accept "constitutional depostism" directed by the CUP as the only possibility of saving the country from chaos. Crawford was a real pragmatist: "Sympathy and disinterested advice are needed rather than newspaper criticism. The Young Turks don't understand criticism, however well intentioned."³

At the time, ignorant of Lowther's opinions, Block told Hardinge that the Embassy was sympathetic to the CUP. The danger did not stem from the CUP, as the Ambassador thought, but from the Germans with their strong support in the Army, where Shevket could be considered as one of their chief supporters. He called for more British support for the new regime and thought England had a better chance of winning over the Ottomans than Germany. He was irritated at Cassel's delay in opening the National Bank because of the uncertainty of the situation. He was sure that the Young Turks would do well: "They are

¹Lowther to Grey, 12.5.09. Pte. GP.79. Lowther to Hardinge, 12.5.09. Pt. LP. Lowther repeated the Carrasso myth in late 1910. Lowther to Grey, 2.11.10. no. 800 FO/371/1017. On the insignificant role played by Carrasso, see: Lewis, *op.cit.*, p.211 n. 4. Herbert, *op.cit.*, p.254.

²Same to same, 5.5.09. no. 322, conf. Minute. 10.5.

³R.F. Crawford to L.N. Guillemand (Chairman of the British Custom House). 16.5.09. Minute by Grey, GP.79.

inexperienced if you like, but they are enthusiastic and determined: the young officers in the army are fine young men, and Shevket Pasha is particularly attractive. He is a strong man and that is what is necessary." He wrote to Hardinge: "In the East constitutions have to be imposed on retrograde and fanatical elements with the stick, and that is what the party in power, the army of Roumelia and the Committee, fully recognize," a motive for unequivocal British support for the new regime which was momentarily to receive a favourable reception in London.¹

But did the Foreign Office really change its policy towards the new regime? Once more the Foreign Office was indulgent with no more than sympathy and moral support. Hardinge's intentions with regard to the Ottoman demand for Customs duties increase from 11% to 15% were therefore hardly surprising: "We intend to seize that opportunity to make known to them our conditions as regards the Baghdad Railway or an alternative concession, and we shall not give way without some countervailing advantage for our commerce." This hardly differed from the rather unsympathetic concession-hunting policy so typical of the British under the Hamidian regime.

Throughout May 1909, the Foreign Office felt that the Young Turks were now going to do well after the "shock" of the Counter-Revolution. Cassel's and Crawford's success was a good sign of this, and the Porte's fairness in the Adana affair was another. Hardinge believed they could make a better, even an "excellent impression" in Europe, by punishing both Moslems and Christians alike. But nothing was further from the British mind than making representations.²

¹ Block to Hardinge, 12.5.09. Pte.HP, 192. same to same, 19.5.09. Pte., ibid., same to same, 16.6.09., ibid.

² Lowther to Hardinge, 12.5.09. Pte. (second letter from the same day) Lowther accused both the Armenians and the local authorities for the Adana massacres. Lowther to Grey, 4.5.09. no. 321. Minutes. FO/371/772. Grey to Lowther, 13.5.09, tel. no. 310. Lowther to Grey, 4.5.09. no. 324. Minutes. Grey to Lowther, 13.5.09, tel. no. 311.

Lowther's assertion that Shevket had in fact become the military dictator of the country did not shock the Foreign Office. On the contrary, Hardinge followed Block in commenting, "Military despotism is the best safeguard for the constitution at present."

The greatest change at the Foreign Office was the suspension of the reform policy itself, clearly as result of the belief that for the time being military despotism was the only way to save the Ottoman Empire from chaos. "Although the actual government is one of veiled, military, despotic character," Hardinge wrote to Bryce, "I cannot help thinking it is the best for the moment, until the new regime has been placed more firmly on its legs. A military despotism is the best safeguard against the overthrow of the Constitution."

Lowther nonetheless tried to moderate the Committee's attitude towards Islam and Moslems.¹ The Young Turks, Lowther argued, were attempting the impossible in trying to force their western ideas on the rest of the Empire - "the true unchanging Orient". He thought that Shevket meant well, but no strong man could survive long with the Committee, and his relations with them were already deteriorating.² The Foreign Office, however, preferred Block's advice if only for a while. He suggested that the increase of the Ottoman military budget should be approved since the Ottoman Army was in "serious decay" as the result of the old regime. The increase was necessary and vital to the Young Turks, whom he regarded as the backbone of the revolution: "Without an army the cause of the progressive party in the State is lost". Further, minuted Mallet, "a strong Turkey will prevent further encroachments on the part of Austria and the army is the prop of the Constitutional movement."³

¹ Hardinge to Bryce, 4.6.09. Pte. ibid., Lowther to Grey, 8.6.09, Pte.LP.

² Lowther to Grey, 7.6.09, no.413. Minute by Hardinge. Lowther to Hardinge. 10.6.09. Pte. LP.

³ Block to the Council of the Foreign Bondholders, 24.6.09. Minute by Mallet. 29.6. FO/371/762/24235.

Naturally the Foreign Office did not have complete confidence in the new regime. Although the situation in Macedonia was quite for the present, there was no doubt, Hardinge admitted, "a general feeling of uncertainty as to the future". In Asia Minor there was "considerable effervescence", to a great extent resulting from hostility towards Islam.¹ The CUP's victory had not caused a lessening of Lowther's trenchant criticism. His critical habit was too strong to submit to a new order of things. The more the Young Turks became entrenched in the ruling centres of the country the greater his criticism. Djauid's nomination as Minister of Finance in June, though welcomed by the Embassy as a sign that the CUP was coming into the open, clinched the Ambassador's conviction about the role of the Jews, despite the fact that he, Djauid, was a Denneh. The initiator of the Jewish myth in the Embassy was clearly Fitzmaurice himself, to whom the whole question was more sinister, since some Jews were also Freemasons. Whilst supply the Young Turks' Revolution with brain power, at the same time they looked after their own selfish interests. It was they who were behind the anti-Bulgarian policy and were the initiators of the distrust towards the "non-Turkish" elements in the Empire since they wanted to possess their economic power, indeed "if not monopoly of Turkey". The result was that the "real Turk" began to resent this "boldness" of the Jews, who were now talking openly about Zionism, which could lead to another massacre, this time of the Jews.² Such information did not shake the Foreign Office's confidence in Fitzmaurice as an important source of information. Lowther was asked if Fitzmaurice kept him well informed, and was promised an increased allowance for information purposes. Lowther commended

¹Hardinge to Bryce, 18.6.09. HPte. HP.17.

²Lowther to Hardinge, 22.6.09. Pte. LP Fitzmaurice to Tyrrell, 27.6.09. Pte. GP.79. On the Jewish myth see: B. Lewis, The Emergence ... (London, 2nd ed. 1968), pp. 211/2. no.4. Hohler, the first Secretary, was also a victim of Fitzmaurice's theories. Hohler, op.cit., p.269. Hardinge, Old Diplomacy, (London 1947) p.175. Waugh is more cautious, A.T. Waugh, Turkey, Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow, (London, 1930), pp.113/4.

Fitzmaurice, who was "indefatigable" in keeping in touch with "all the various elements of the local political world", for excepting the Russian, no embassy was better informed than the British. But Lowther doubted if more money would bring better information for he regarded himself as a critical observer and not a simple channel of information: "I think towards changing people's views than to extracting news." [Sic!]¹ Lowther suspected that Block was responsible for the allegations of his loss of influence with the Committee. Hardinge admitted that it was Block and apologised to Lowther.² Lowther did not yet realize how far the Foreign Office had gone in abandoning its sympathetic line made public after the Revolution. No questions better exemplified this than those of the Baghdad Railway and the Customs increase. Lowther, who suggested that they deal with these questions separately, was accused by the Foreign Office of forgetting the political aspect of the question. The Baghdad Railway Committee, he was reminded, had in March 1907, concluded that the completion of the Railway under exclusive German auspices would have a "disastrous" effect on British commercial and political interests.

While insisting that connecting the Customs increase with the Baghdad Railway would "at once" alienate both the CUP and the Porte, Lowther remained unconvinced that a purely German railway would result in the destruction of British trade, though he conceded that this might have grave political implications.³ Lowther also minimised the possibility of Von der Goltz's likely presence in Constantinople to reorganise the Ottoman Army. Hardinge sided with this view, but not Mallet, who feared that this might end in the Porte's fighting

¹ Hardinge to Lowther, 29.6.09. Pte. LP. Lowther to Hardinge, 6.7.09 Pte. ibid.

² Pears, supported by Duxton, was also involved in these allegations. Mallet to Grey, 23.6.09. FO/371/777/23938. Lowther to Hardinge, 6.7.09. Pte., LP. Hardinge to Lowther, 13.7.09. Block was Fitzmaurice's "opponent" and "critic", Herbert, op.cit., p.271

³ Lowther to Hardinge, 16.6.09. Pte. op.cit. Same to same, 6.7.09. Pte. LP. Lowther to Grey, 25.5.09. no. 375, minutes, 1.6. BD.VI, no.270

on Germany's side in the event of a general conflagration.¹

By August Lowther again argued that the Embassy had "intimate relations" with the "mild chauvinists and moderates" of the CUP. He presumed that once the chauvinists took office they would "soon" become moderate. But at the same time he warned Kiamil against accepting the Committee's offer to head a new Government composed of their members, "without a very clear understanding as to the authority he was to exercise." Lowther felt that the CUP saw themselves alone ruling the country even though the "majority" of the country was against them. He criticised their anti-democratic rule, free thinking and opposition to Islam, and was "afraid of their inexperience and selfish methods".² Lowther denied rumours that relations between the Embassy and the Young Turks had deteriorated. Assessing the success of the CUP delegation to England, Lowther reported that they had complained of too much lecturing: "There is nothing they hate so much. To be friends with the Turks, especially young^{*}, never comment or criticize what they are doing - agree with them always and they will follow you."³ And he continued. "The methods [of the Committee] are still those of Abdul-Hamid, only instead of their being applied by one man, they are applied by a few, the Committee." He could not see any forthcoming improvement in the lot of the Christians. The bulk of the Young Turks meant well, but a group of young officers openly threatening their opponents were the real troublemakers. Instead of coming into the open and governing constitutionally, they

¹ Gosche to Grey, 19.6.09. no.228 very conf. Minutes, 22.6. Lowther to Grey, 14.7.09, no. 552. Same to same, 3.8.09. no.621.

² Lowther to Hardinge, 20.7.09. Pte. LP. Lowther to Grey, 20.7.09. Pte. ibid (second private letter from the same day). Lowther to Hardinge, 27.7.09. Pte. ibid.

³ Lowther to Tyrrell, 2.8.09. Fitzmaurice persuaded the CUP to give religious appearance to the Delegation by adding two Hodgas, and warned them not to miss prayers as they would be watched . . . Indeed, Curzon thought they were good Moslems. Fitzmaurice to Tyrrell, 27.6.09. Pte. op.cit.

*Lowther's italics.

preferred to control and criticize from behind the scenes claiming inexperience in government.¹

It was at the beginning of August that the Ambassador realized that the existing Government was in Britain's interest since any other government would be more chauvinistic, particularly dangerous in the tense situation over Crete. Hardinge agreed, but thought that the Porte should show "some sort of front" [sic] to the extreme Young Turks. Nevertheless, according to Lowther, the Foreign Office had "overvalued" the Young Turks, the "wild chauvinists", since April. He particularly resented that this critical view of the CUP was not followed by the Foreign Office. "If one is not enthusiastically optimistic, one is suspected of not being in sympathy with the Young Turks, which is absurd."² Still he explained away the warlike attitude of the Ottomans towards Greece as engendered by their need to show that they were doing something tangible during the past year "as 90% of the population are daily protesting that no good has come of the new regime."³

But in the Foreign Office the optimistic mood continued. Grey told Izvolsky that "the only thing we could do for the present, was to support the new regime in Turkey as long as there was any prospect of its success. Once or twice lately those who had been longest in Constantinople, and thought they understood the situation well had expressed the opinion that the Young Turks were failing, or had actually failed, but recent events had proved very clearly that it would have been a great mistake to accept any assumption of this kind." This was accepted by Izvolsky who agreed that the Ottoman Empire should be strong in order to face any Austrian advance.⁴ But privately

¹ Lowther to Findlay, 3.8.09. Pte. LP.

² Lowther to Tyrrell, 15.8.09. Pte. LP.

³ Lowther to Grey, 18.8.09., Pte., ibid. O'Beirne to Grey, 9.8.09. no.462 conf. Findlay to Grey, 18.8.09, tel. no. 83. Secret. Minutes. 19.8.

⁴ Memo. by Grey, 6.8.09. Secret. BD.IX. 1. no.33.

despair already presided in the higher echelons of the Foreign Office. Thus Hardinge was sceptical on the future of the Ottoman Empire. "I think we have every reason to fear its collapse in the not far distant future" he commented on warnings from "competent" people in Cairo. "In any case we have not so far staked too much upon its permanent success."¹ The policy of the CUP, indeed, later justified this prophecy. Meanwhile, the Law of Association legislation (23 August 1909) intended to abolish national differences within the Empire was welcomed in the Foreign Office as a stabilizing factor and there was thus no surprise of severe measures taken by the Porte to silence Greek propaganda or at the Young Turks being "very adroit in 'nobbling'" the Albanian congress at Dibra into an Ottoman one, by forming a commission of their supporters.²

Britain now saw the problem of the administration of the Empire as more important than that of the nationalities. Hence Lowther's strong objection to "the chief ambition of every Young Turk", for the abolition of the Capitulations, a suggestion made by the new Russian Ambassador, Tcharyk.v, who was "courting" them. Lowther believed there was insufficient stability in the governmental system of the Empire "however zealous and patriotic may be those who are at the helm for the present." He cited the light sentences given in the court-martial at Adana as an argument against abandonment. Such an attempt to abandon the judicial rights of foreigners would be "suicidal".

Marling, the Charge at Constantinople, also did not see the national differences in the Empire as relevant. The new Law concerning

¹Hardinge to Graham, 1.10.09. Pte. HP, 17.

²Lowther to Grey, 2.8.09, no. 614. Minutes, same to same, 9.8.09 no. 647. Minutes, same to same, 22.8.09, no. 890. Minutes by Lindsay, 31.8. See also: S. Skendi, The Albanian National Awakening, 1878 - 1912 (Princeton, 1967), pp.376ff.

³Same to same, 13.9.09 no. 763, conf. Minutes, Nicolson to Grey, 5.10.09. no. 541.

the Conscription of non-Moslems (11 August) would further the creation of an Ottoman nation, though the "Turks" remained suspicious of the enrolment of the Bulgarians and Armenians. Seen as a purely internal problem, the Foreign Office carefully avoided representations on the conscription of a non-Moslem, even in such areas as the Sporades Islands, which had refused representation in the Ottoman Parliament in order not to lose their privileges.¹

Although there was a good deal of confidence in the Foreign Office that the new regime would be able to overcome the national differences, Mallet believed it "improbable" that the Porte intended to separate Church and State, an attempt seen by both the Armenian and Greek Patriarchs, to "Turkicize" their Christian subjects. The Armenian Patriarch rightly argued that if the Porte's intention was to separate religious and state affairs, beginning with Islam, the Sheikh-ul-Islam should be debarred from sitting in the Cabinet and the Sultan no longer be the Caliph. These important reports passed almost unnoticed in the Foreign Office, who were more preoccupied in obtaining concessions in Mesopotamia.² Still, Hardinge was quite sure that British policy was based not on self-interest but on the sanctity of Treaties.³

Lowther was less preoccupied with the concession-hunting than the Foreign Office. The internal situation worried him more: "On all sides I hear the most pessimistic accounts of disorder, insubordination and discontent. I hope they may prove exaggerated." He warned Britain not to identify with one section of the CUP for fear of backing

¹ Marling to Grey, 5.11.09. no. 888. Same to same, 10.11.09. no. 899. Same to same, 9.11.09. no. 892. Minutes, same to same, 4.12.09, no. 944. Minutes.

² Same to same, 19.10.09, no. 860. Minute by Mallet, 2.11. Hardinge to Marling, 2.11.09. Pte. HP (PRO)

³ Russell to Grey, 28.10.09. no. 174. Minute by Hardinge, 2.11.

the wrong horse. Lowther's pessimism reached new depths: "Everyone is so depressed about the future that I hardly dare write about it." He saw a further diminution of the Government's authority and the increasing power of the CUP. His antipathy to the Young Turks remained strong as ever, because of the so-called Jewish and Zionist influences aiming at Palestine and Mesopotamia. Lowther pointed out how the British attitude in the 4% Customs increase, the Lynch question, the support given to Russia against Ottoman inroads into Persia and the Cretan question had all disillusioned the new regime with Britain:

There is no doubt that perhaps the fulsome flattery that was poured upon Turkey by British statesmen of both parties and by English press, encouraged many here to believe that Turkey could look to G. Britain not only for moral but for material assistance in case she required it. They did not realize that the admiration of the British public was prompted more by the worship of Parliamentary institutions and the academic sympathy for a country emancipating itself from tyranny than by any special love of Turkey and her people.¹

The general situation was now seen as completely unstable. Lowther, who only recently praised Hakki as preferable to Hilmi, considered him by March 1910 as disappointing, while the financial situation was worse as usual, Parliament was now in "a perfect pandemonium", the Cabinet no more than an instrument in the CUP's hands and the Sultan a "pitiable figure".²

The Foreign Office now inclined to pay less attention than before to the question of administrative reform of the Empire as long as there was a strong government at Constantinople with a reasonable policy towards the Christian population. Thus when Charles R. Buxton asked in Parliament if the Government would publish the recent reports of their Consuls on the state of the European provinces of the Empire, and Mr. J.H. Whitehouse asked the same question for the Armenian provinces, Grey said that the Government had no intention of doing so.

¹ Lowther to Hardinge, 5.1.10. Pte. LP. Same to same, 12.1.10. Pte., ibid. Same to same, 18.1.10. Pte., ibid. Annual Report for Turkey for the year 1909, p.6 in: Lowther to Grey, 31.1.10. no.55. FO/371/1002.

² Lowther to Hardinge, 9.3.10. Pte. LP.

For, it was felt within the Foreign Office, "There are no papers on the internal affairs of Turkey that could be published without giving umbrage at Constantinople and doing - if anything - more harm than good."¹

Nevertheless, the situation, especially in Macedonia, was far better than during the old regime. The number of murders during February was eight, and in March three, in comparison to between 200 and 500 a month during the old regime. Therefore the Foreign Office found it odd that the CUP had asked the Balkan Committee to renew public criticism in order to fortify the Young Turks' hands. Mallet considered it necessary to dissuade Noel Buxton from "mischievous intervention" which would be "ill-timed and disastrous" since it would be looked upon as an attack on the new regime. At a time when the Balkan Committee indulged in pro-CUP manifestations, the Foreign Office and the Embassy were already highly critical.²

Thus Lowther, inspired by Fitzmaurice, continued to explain the motives of the CUP by reference to the "Jews, Socialists and Freemasons" as supreme in their ranks. For "We are going through one of our bad stages - a marked supremacy of the bad elements of the Committee which means exaggerated Chauvinism." Hakki and Rifaat were powerless since they did not belong to the "inside" body of the CUP. In April 1910 Lowther's despair of the Young Turks was complete: "I am, I fear, rapidly coming to the conclusion there are no large-minded and able men in the new regime, and my faith is, in spite of myself, beginning to be shaken in those I believed to be honest." One year after the Counter-Revolution he could not report on any achievement obtained by the new regime, except from an increased and improved army with a larger expenditure.³

¹ Minute by Lindsay, 31.3.10. FO/371/1008/11863. The question was asked in Parliament on 5 April. Hansard, vol. XVI, Col. 190.

² Buxton to Tyrrell, 27.3.10. minutes, 6.4. FO/371/1007/11043. T.P. Conwell Evans, Foreign Policy From a Back Bench, (London, 1932) and M. Anderson, Noel Buxton: A Life, (London, 1952). Both these authors are biased in describing Buxton's relations with the Young Turks.

³ Lowther to Hardinge, 27.4.10. Pte. LP. Same to same, 27.4.10. Pte: ibid. (A second letter from the same day). Lowther to Maxwell, 27.4.10. Pte. ibid. Fitzmaurice to Tyrrell, 14.5.10. Pte. G.P. 79. same to same, 14.2.14. Pte. ibid.

Following the same line Hardinge was no longer alarmed at threats to the Ottoman Empire: "For the first time since the Committee have been in power I am not sorry that they are having a little trouble. My reason for saying so is that we do not like the Chauvinism which the Turks are displaying both in Crete and Egypt. They will have to receive a severe check in the near future if there is any intrigue on their part with the Nationalists in Egypt. The latter seem to have thought that, with the spread of self-government, they could put an end to the occupation. No government in this country would stand this, and we shall have to put our foot down very firmly before long." This had already been done by Britain with regard to Mesopotamia where Lowther was ordered to "press hard" for the Tigris concession.¹

The Foreign Office, and the Embassy in particular,² had now begun to see the Albanian rebellion as a real threat to the new regime. Hardinge expressed his anxiety that the Albanian revolt might encourage the Bulgarians to start troubles which was already in the unpromising situation. At this difficult point, by early May, Hardinge expressed considerable despair to Cartwright :

We are not satisfied with the situation in Constantinople. The CUP, with the best intentions in the world, appear to be gaining very little ground. At the back of them stands the figure of Shevket Pasha, as military dictator, and his word is absolute law. In addition to the fact that there is very little ability amongst the members of the Committee, there is, we hear, intense jealousy amongst them, and this, as anyone can see, must have a corroding and deteriorating influence. We hear that corruption is again rampant, although the monies obtained are said to be poured into the coffers of the Committee.³

¹ Findlay to Hardinge, 13.4.10. Pte. HP.192. Hardinge to Lowther, 3.5.10. Pte. LP. The Foreign Office was encouraged by the India Office to prefer a concession for a railway to the Gulf upon the much-hated Lynch monopoly. India Office to Foreign Office, 28.4.10. Minute by Mallet. FO/371/996/14684.

² Fitzmaurice to Tyrrell, 14.5.10. Pte. GP.79. Same to Same, 14.2.10; Pte., *ibid.* Lowther to Hardinge, 27.4.10. Pte. *Op.cit.* same to same, 27.4.10. Pte. *ibid.*, (A second letter from the same day). On the Albanian revolt see: Skendi, *op.cit.* *passim*.

³ Hardinge to Cartwright, 3.5.10. Pte. HP. 21. Hardinge to Findlay, 3.5.10. Pte., *ibid.* Lowther to Grey, 21.4.10. no. 251. Minutes, 10.5. Same to same, 3.5.10. no. 268, minutes, 14.5. FO/371/1007.

By late May Lowther and Fitzmaurice completely despaired of any possibility of fulfilling the original Young Turkish goal of one Ottoman nation. Instead the CUP was seen as a dangerous movement which intended to "Turkify" the various elements of the Empire and considered itself as "the vanguard of an awakened Asia". According to Fitzmaurice the Young Turks estranged all the "non-Turkish" elements except the Tashnaks and the Jews. The difficulties the Young Turks faced in Albania were now regarded as a bad omen. Fitzmaurice still insisted that the Jews, freemasons and Zionists were running Young Turkey. Lowther believed this until the end of his Ambassadorship, but Mallet, his successor, rejected it as a legend.¹ This was, however, hardly the analysis of the Ottoman internal scene which really explained the CUP's chauvinism. The alienation of the CUP from Britain had rather been engendered by their despotic rule and by Britain's pressure for concessions and monopolies in Mesopotamia and her attitude in the Cretan question.² Lowther himself was concerned that the Porte should understand that there was no difference between the policy formulated in London and the policy carried out by the Embassy. Grey and Hardinge obliged a thankful Lowther who wrote: "I am very glad you gave Nifaaat some straight talk. He always seemed to imply that my criticisms went beyond what the Foreign Office would endorse. He will now know that it is not so." He argued that even if the Porte overcame the Albanian troubles, they might be pushed into a more warlike attitude towards Greece.³

¹ Lowther to Hardinge, 25.5.10. Pte. LP. same to same, 29.5.10. Pte. ibid. (drafted by Fitzmaurice). Mallet to Grey, 9.12.13. Pte. GP, 80.

² Hardinge to Lowther, 31.5.10. Pte. LP. Hardinge to Cartwright, 3.5.10. Pte. op.cit.

³ Lowther to Hardinge, 8.6.10. Pte., ibid. Hardinge to Findlay, 31.5.10. Pte. HP, 21. Hardinge to O'Beirne, 8.6.10. Pte., ibid., Findlay to Hardinge, 25.5.10. Pte. HP, 192. Hardinge to Cartwright, 14.6.10. Pte., ibid., Hardinge to Lowther, 14.6.10., Pte. LP. Lowther to Hardinge, 15.6.10. Pte. LP.

In mid-June 1910 the situation at Constantinople further deteriorated, according to Lowther, when the editor of "Sedai-Millet," Ahmed Samim, was murdered. This paper belonged to a Greek deputy and was the last remnant of opposition in the capital. Two deputies from the opposition resigned after being accused of unpatriotic and reactionary inclinations. Lowther seized this opportunity to express his deep disappointment in the internal situation:-

. . . it is another sign that opposition is a thing which cannot be understood and cannot exist in the East, whether it is opposition to Abdul-Hamid or to a committee. There can be no greater bar than this to the development of liberty and free institutions. Whilst it was impossible, at the time of the re-establishment of the constitution, not to entertain some doubts as to how far the constitutional principles were suited to an independent Oriental people, it is indeed discouraging to find those doubts so fully justified, to observe how the elementary notions of liberty as it is understood in the West, are foreign to the Turkish mind, and to realize how barren of results are all the fine aspirations which attended the revolution of 24th July 1908. If it were possible to point to any real progress, to the inception of any scheme of public works, to any improvement in the judicial system, to any liberal and statesmanlike legislation, to any scheme for the development of industry, there would be still room for a feeling of satisfaction. But as things stand at present, the worst enemies of the Turkish Empire could not wish that affairs should take any course than that in which they are now being directed, and any words of advice or warning are met in a spirit of arrogant chauvinism, suspicion and sensitive pride.

Lowther had no doubt that Samim had been killed by the CUP. This was: "A bad outlook" and considered "ominous" in the Foreign Office. Both here and in the Embassy the Young Turks were seen as terrorizing their opponents.¹ Hardinge revealed the deterioration in British and Ottoman relations: "The situation in Turkey is very bad at present, and our influence there is greatly dwindling, while Marschall has apparently recovered a great deal of his lost authority with the Turks. The CUP appear to have inaugurated a despotism even more drastic than that practised by our friend Abdul-Hamid. This, of course, suits the

¹ Lowther to Grey, 14.6.10, no. 379, conf. Minutes by Parker and Grey. 21.6.10. FO/371/1010. Same to same, 13.7.10. no. 481. conf. Minutes, 22.7. ibid.

Germans very well. It looks to me as though there must be another explosion in Constantinople before long."¹

Lowther's reports on the policy of the CUP and the Cabinet directed by them - the Government of "sansculottes" as he called them - found a ready ear in the Foreign Office. But Hardinge's despair astonished even Lowther. The situation was after all not so bad: "we are apt to forget that we are still passing through a Revolutionary period. Although I fear it must be admitted that the Turks themselves are hopeless and that so far all assurances of equal rights for all have not been fulfilled, there is still a chance, a vague one it must be admitted, that the moderate and reasonable folk may perhaps gain the day." He was more happy about the CUP's independent attitude in foreign affairs: "The pro-German, pro-French or pro-any Power attitude is exaggerated. They are for their own purposes pro-Islam and the bad feature of the question is that the people who really run the show are pro-themselves and nothing else." He knew very well however that so long as "the energetic sections" of the Army supported the Committee, no progress could be made in the internal situation.²

Lowther's views and opinions, including his freemasonry-jewish myth, were generally received favourably in the Foreign Office, where it was admitted that the reports of the Ambassador and the Consuls had perceived the "very considerable dissatisfaction" with the Young Turks in both Albania and Macedonia, because of their "over doing things for a long time past." Findlay, the British Minister at Sofia, also shared Lowther's views on the considerable deterioration of the new regime and pointed out to the CUP's megalomania which was no more than

¹Hardinge to Coschen, 28.6.10. Pte. HP, 21. Hardinge to Lowther, 28.6.10. Pte. LP.

²Lowther to Hardinge, 6.7.10. Pte., ibid., same to same, 19.7.10. Pte., ibid.

an enormous "bluff", but which might lead them to create troubles in Egypt and India.¹

The high regard in the Foreign Office for Lowther as a first class diplomat was exemplified by the offer of the Ambassadorship at St. Petersburg following Nicolson's succession to Hardinge as Permanent Under-Secretary. Lowther turned it down on account of health, dislike of Russia and to the surprise of all in London, because he regarded the Embassy at St. Petersburg as inferior to that at Constantinople.²

Quite independently of Lowther, the Foreign Office learned that the Ottoman Army in Macedonia was in a very bad state of discipline which could make it easier for the Bulgarians to launch a successful attack in the event of another upheaval at Constantinople. Hardinge admitted that the Ottomans were brutally disarming the population but did not believe that the Powers' intervention would make "the slightest difference" in the CUP's tactics. Besides, the whole situation in the Ottoman Empire was regarded at the Foreign Office as "critical" and likely to remain so.³

The end of Hardinge's tenure of office saw relations with the Young Turks in stagnation, if not speedily deteriorating, because of, according to Hardinge, the Ottoman refusal to grant monopoly concessions to Britain in Mesopotamia, the boycott on Greek trade and the nature of the regime established by the CUP in the capital and in the provinces.⁴ Lowther added that Britain's friendship was regarded by the Ottomans as limited to words because of her attitude in the question of Crete, the Persian frontier and the Egyptian problem, and of Britain's

¹ Lowther to Grey, 11.7.10. no. 474. Minutes by Parker and Norman, 18.7. Findlay to Hardinge, 6.7.10. Pte. HP. 192. Hardinge to Lowther, 26.6.10. Pte. LP.

² Hardinge to O'Beirne, 5.7.10. Pte. HP, 21. Hardinge regarded Lowther as abler than Buchanan, Nicolson's successor at St. Petersburg. Hardinge op.cit., p.130.

³ Findlay to Grey, 21.7.10. no. 90, conf. Minutes, 25.7. BD.IX. 1. no.159. Hardinge to Findlay, 26.7.10. Pte. HP, 21. Lowther to Grey, 11.7.10. no. 498. Minute by Norman. 30.7. FC/371/999.

⁴ Hardinge to Lowther, 26.7.10. Pte. LP.

refusal to sell warships to the Porte. The Embassy now accused the Young Turks of substituting Pan-Islamism for Ottomanism, using the Islamic fervour of the people for their chauvinistic purposes. Lowther also saw the ominous growth of German influence in the Army, because of the Baghdad Railway and Russia's capitulation in the previous year over Bosnia.¹

Thus, when evidence had been received that the CUP had at their Congress at Monastir, in order to maintain the predominance of the "Turk", abandoned the former policy of granting equality and liberty to the Christians in Macedonia, Britain's line towards the Young Turks became stiffer. The revelations had shocked the Foreign Office, where the Christian elements in Macedonia were still regarded as Ottomans, with merely religious bonds with the Balkan States. "The playing off one nationality against another", remarked Grey, "is the old policy of Abdul Hamid and would lead to the same result." He began to give credence to the stories about the brutal policy of the Young Turks in their disarmament policy in Macedonia. This information was first obtained from the Bulgarian statesman Liaptcheff and therefore dismissed by Hardinge as far from being the "gospel truth", although Parker already considered the Porte's policy as "very foolish". The situation was considered by Norman as bearing resemblance to the policy of the old regime only when Lamb and Lowther informed on the "brutalities" which had accompanied the disarmament. A less condemnatory report from Lamb, through Lowther, could not change Grey's opinion that the brutal method of disarming caused the trouble.²

The Foreign Office still however avoided following Findlay's advice from Sofia to make "categorical" representations to the Porte but momentarily followed Lowther's, since such a move would not cause umbrage at Constantinople "even if made in a friendly and unofficial manner". I am opposed to championship of Macedonian Slavs by HMG alone", Lowther argued, "being of opinion that they should look in the first instance to Russia, if one Pöwer

¹Lowther to Grey, 30.7.10. no. 521. conf. BD.IX.i. No. 161. Lowther to Hardinge, 29.5.10. Pte., op.cit.

²Findlay to Grey, 22.7.10. tel. no. 30 conf. Minutes, same to same, 2.8.10. no.94 Secret. ibid., no. 163. Lowther to Grey, 30.7.10. no. 522. Minutes, 9.8. FO/371/1012, same to same, 26.7.10, no.512.Minute by Grey, 3.8. Same to same, 4.8.10. no. 543, minutes,8.8. same to same. 19.7.10.no.498.Minute by Norman,307/FO/371/999

alone is to advocate their cause."¹ However, the condemnatory evidence against the CUP was too overwhelming for the FO to ignore. Already/against the Porte's policy in the Railway, the Gulf, Crete, Persia and Egypt, the FO now accepted rather readily the Bulgarian and Servian rejection of the CUP policy of 'Turcification' in Albania and Macedonia. Hence Norman's comment on Milovanovitch's aggressiveness towards the Young Turks:

"M. Milovanovitch's policy, if not very noble, is prudent. It consists in truckling to Turkey in spite of all the barbarity which the Turks may inflict on Servians in Macedonia, until the moment arrives when, Turkey being in difficulties with Greece, Servia with Bulgaria and perhaps Roumania, can fall on her flank and despoil her of Macedonia ... "²

Few days earlier Grey was even more revealing when he wrote to his new Permanent Under-Secretary that

"Turkey is going to give trouble: the Turks are continually doing unreasonable things and they are on the brink of great financial difficulty. Overweening ambition, arbitrary conduct and financial straits combined are a dangerous mixture."

He found Nicolson more than ready to accept his foreboding. Nicolson suggested to make a serious warning to the Porte. He added few days later:

"I am not a great believer in the new regime, and am sceptical that any Turk, young or old or middleaged, would really place the moslem and Christian on an equal footing."³

So far as Britain was concerned, including the FO, Ambassadors, Ministers and Consuls, all were aware that the Young Turks had betrayed their original constitutional commitments. Thus anti-CUP comments became the order of the day for British officials at home and abroad. The drastic and the unconstitutional methods of the CUP supplied them with a golden opportunity to shake off the last shreds of hasty and sympathetic moral commitments made after the Revolution. "As they are not sufficiently effecient to do so ["Turcification"] by peaceful administrative means", Lindsay commented in London, "they welcome, or even foment small local insurrections so as to carry out their plans, maner militare."⁴

¹Lowther to Grey, 22.8.10. tel. no. 164. FO/371/999 (minutes by Mallet and Grey). Tewpik to Grey, 31.7.10. Minutes, 2.8 ibid., 27806. Grey to Tewpik, 6.8.10. BD. IX.1. no. 169.

²Cartwright to Grey, 12.8.10.no.137.conf. Minute by Norman, 28.8. ibid., no.172.

³Grey to Nicolson, 18.8.10.Pte.GP, 73.Nicolson to Grey, 24.8.10. Pte. ibid.

⁴Lowther to Grey, 7.8.10. no.555. Minute by Lindsay, 15.8. FO/371/1012.

And Norman added in the same line: "It is of the disadvantages of the new regime that we no longer interfere to get matters improved as we could under the old."¹

The Young Turk policy of "levelling" and "Turkifying" their "non-Turkish" elements was by no means limited to the Christian population. The "unjustified massacre" of the Druses in the Hauran which accompanied the introduction of general taxation and conscription was seen by Lowther only as a beginning of Turcification in Syria and the Hedjaz. However, the main scene was the European provinces, where, so the FO was reassured, Talaat and Djavid the CUP's delegates in the Cabinet had secretly admitted, that the equality between Moslems and Christians was an "unrealizable ideal" as Talaat confessed in a secret CUP gathering. Now Lowther could affirm that "To them 'Ottoman' evidently means 'Turk' and their present policy of 'Ottomanization' is one of pounding the non-Turkish elements in a Turkish mortar." The CUP's inclination towards Germany and Austria and their fear of Russia's backing Bulgaria, a "bugbear" of the Reval magnitude, were the "least encouraging" to Mallet's taste, who expected another revolution. Facing such an "intricate and involved" situation Mallet could not suggest but to play a "waiting game".² He had not yet reached the pessimism shared by Grey and Nicolson or by his subordinates. A little later Marling reported that October was the worst one in Macedonia since the Revolution as far as political murders were concerned.³ Nonetheless, Winston Churchill, the Home Secretary, who visited Constantinople at this crucial point brimmed over with optimism. He saw Talaat and Djavid, and was strongly impressed by the "quality, vigour, and practical character" of the CUP Government. They appeared to him both in their views and methods "thoroughly modern indeed": "... their relations as colleagues and their

¹ Same to same, 7.8.10. no. 552. Minute, 27.8. FO/371/1003.

² Same to same, 6.9.10. No. 635. conf. ibid. no. 181. Minutes. 12.9. There is too much additional material in the FO archives to prove the authenticity of this letter, which had been questioned by Gooch and Temperley, ibid., pp. vii-viii. See: Same to same, 2.11.10. no. 800 FO/371/1017.

³ Marling to Grey, 19.11.10. no. 838. Minutes, FO/371/1000.

general manner reminded me of our own way of doing business than of the Ministers of any other country I have seen. No higher praise is in my power!" He felt sorrow that the Porte and England had drifted apart in a time when "great hopes" could be seen for their winning the battle for regeneration and territorial integrity, though he saw the obstacles of Egypt, the Entente with Russia and the Lynch affair as preventing better relations. He also told Blunt that he would advise the Porte to abstain^{from} all wars for the next five years, while improving their army and finances. But not even Churchill's accolades could reverse the opinions to Grey and the Foreign Office.¹

Block too had offered the Foreign Office a more optimistic view of the situation than the Embassy. He claimed that although the new regime recently counted more on the Triple Alliance, they would not throw in their lot with that Alliance, since they were opportunists and would "always play off one power against another and try to get as much as they can from any or all of them. Perhaps this secular policy of Turkey is natural. All nations on the downward grade, and especially Turkey which knows it has been bested by Europe for ages and feels that Europe has been slowly pressing her back to Asia, will twist and turn like a hunted animal and resort to every will and strategy to ensure their existence." He encouraged the British Government to exert her good influence through her many friends in the country "but we want patience, incessant activity, and as often as not strong action, together with the assurance of real sympathy with their somewhat crude but genuine efforts to improve and strengthen their country. It is the old story of the Stick and the Sugar for the Oriental, and I still think the respect for England will in the long run allow us to get a hearing when we offer our sympathy." He saw improvements where Lowther had not, in the administration, finance, navy, and of course, in the army, but admitted that the crux of the question

¹Churchill to Grey, 20.9.10. Secret. GP.97. Blunt, My Diaries, II pp.335/6 (London, 1919).

was money, which he still believed the Porte would obtain.¹

Lowther was much less encouraging than Block. The only improvement he could see was in the Mesopotamian irrigations, and even that slight one was unsatisfactory. He discounted the improvements in the Army and rejected Shevket's theory that once the Army was strong, all internal difficulties would disappear and economic success would ensue: "a theory which to Western ideas is like that of basing the pyramid on its apex." Such a policy was bound to ruin the Empire since "the Turkish finance will be a kind of calendar, each year marked by a special loan, until at last some crisis comes."² Even with regard to the Armenians nothing remained of the good intentions of the CUP who had promised to restore the lands which had been usurped by the Kurds.³

September was a crucial month for the Young Turks, since they found it hard to obtain French loans with "honourable" conditions. Block warned that this would cause the fall of Djavid and consequently the fall of the CUP itself, driving them entirely into the arms of the Triple Alliance. He defended the Young Turks in their desire to free themselves from the French after their experience with the Ottoman Bank: "I do not suppose that England wants to see the break up of the Young Turkey party or a reshuffling of the cards in this country. We know that these men have got the desire and the determination to rehabilitate the country even though they are inexperienced and commit many faults but we are absolutely in the dark as to what would happen should they disappear". Little did he know how far the Foreign Office had diverged from their former line. "If the Turks would not be aggressive beyond or in [sic!] their frontiers and would really devote themselves to internal reforms", wrote Grey, "I should share the feeling of this letter entirely."⁴ Lowther also agreed that if the loan would not come

¹Block to Hardinge, 10.9.10. Minute by Grey, 19.9 FO/371/993/33484.

²Lowther to Grey, 27.6.10. no. 434. Very conf. Minutes, *ibid.*

³Same to same, 18.7.10. no. 495. Minute by Lindsay, 2.8.

⁴Block to Hardinge, 21.9.10. Minute 24.10. FO/371/994/38775. Bertie to Tyrrell, 11.8.10. Pte. & Conf. BP, 180.

through "the situation of Young Turkey becomes dangerous and I imagine it is to all our interests to avoid that eventuality." It was perhaps easier for Block to defend the CUP since he regarded them as "opportunists" and as he did not share Lowther's liberal expectations. The Ambassador advised the Foreign Office that money should be given to the Porte but he warned against making too easy terms for them, otherwise they would become "a source of infinite trouble". This was of special importance as there was a possibility of war with Greece.¹ France should use the Ottoman request for loans as a deterrent against any possibility of the Ottomans' attempt to join the Central European Powers. He warned that "a good slice" of the money negotiated at the moment in Paris would be spent on the Army Corps at Baghdad and Erzeroum for a more aggressive policy in the Gulf and in Persia. "The policy of the Committee is so entirely opposed to the interests of this country that the closest cooperation with the French Government is essential, and the interests of the National Bank are minor."²

Babington-Smith, the director of the National Bank, was still trying to convince the Foreign Office not to sacrifice the interests of the Bank for those of the much-hated Ottoman Bank, believing that it was worthwhile to show genuine friendship to the Young Turks in their efforts to reorganise their country. He had not realized the change which British policy had undergone during the summer of 1910 as Parker summarized correctly:-

[circumstances had] changed in Turkey, there has been harsh treatment of the subject races in Macedonia, a rather unfriendly policy towards Greece, and signs of a military preparation on a disquieting scale. When the National Bank was started we hoped that Turkey was entering on a period of regeneration, which British finance might further; now, although we did so much for them two years ago, the Turks seem to set on working against our interests, and also on a policy of extravagance which must end in bankruptcy.³

¹Lowther to Grey, 21.9.10. Pte. LP.

²Lowther to Grey, 28.9.10. no. 692. Minutes, 3.10. FO/371/993. Same to same, 20.9.10. tel. no. 196. conf.

³Babington-Smith to Nicolson, 7.10.10. Minutes 10.10. FO/371/993/36804. When assessing the situation again in 1917 Parker mentioned these causes but regarded the Chauvinists policy of the CUP in the Persian Gulf and Mesopotamia as primary //A. Parker/, "The Baghdad Railway Negotiations". Quarterly Review (October, 1917), pp. 511-12.

Now Pan-Islam was the predominant spectre in both the Embassy and in London: "Turkish victories over Greece would resound in Islamic countries like Morocco, Algiers, Egypt, Persia, Afghanistan, India, Central Asia, etc., and be magnified a hundredfold in the imaginations of the backward Moslem masses in these countries."¹ After more than two years of thought Lowther concluded that the Young Turk movement was "more a Pan-Islamic revival than a simple change of government from despotism to a so-called constitutionalism". Previously the Ambassador had just been enraged by the fact that the Young Turks used Islam for their secular and militant aims. They called for the adoption of the science and the industrial methods of the West, while retaining the "blessed customs" of Islam in order to help their Army to obtain arms to free from "Christian servitude" 350 million Moslems from Java to Morocco. Here the CUP were "more Catholic than the Pope". Moreover, "Pan-Islamism under the old regime was defensive as compared with neo-Pan-Islamism of the new dispensation, which is positive and aggressive."² This political exploitation of Islam while admitting that church and state were interwoven in Islam, was regarded more than as just bad taste. One could understand his point of view by even more striking example. The Young Turks, much as they were "freethinkers, positivists and Freemasons" still ordered a strict observation of the Ramadan fast. Not less than 290 moslems were imprisoned for breaking it in public and duly received fifty strokes as required by the Sheri Law. While this happened, Talaat, Djavid and others were lunching "sumptuously", drinking wine and smoking the best cigars.³

Lowther did not fail to hint to Nicolson, that the "revolutionary and socialistic" ideas of the CUP might affect questions like Egypt and Persia. He felt also that Britain's relations with the Young Turks had reached a deadlock:

¹Lowther to Grey, 21.9.10. No. 672. FO/371/1015. Same to same, 28.9.10. no. 692 op.cit.

²Same to same, 9.10.10. no. 715 FO/371/1016.

³Same to same, 19.10.10. no. 746.

I am at a loss to suggest a special line of policy. If we are nice to them as we have been, they accept it as their due, as they imagine themselves Constitutional. If we threaten them with measures we may never carry out, we only encourage them to fall into the arms of the Triple Alliance.

Britain's position had become "ridiculous", as it was proved by the ambiguous attitude towards Cassel's National Bank. But "the difficulty of our position here is mainly owing to our entente with Russia and to Egypt", which were kept in the background during the rule of "the moderates" under Kiamil and Hilmi. He suggested that the Young Turks would get a setback on account of the loan negotiated in Paris, otherwise they would follow an anti-Russian line which would also mean an anti-British line. The net result was that the loan was obtained from Germany.¹

The news concerning the possibility of the new regime joining the Triple Alliance was discouraging. Marschall repudiated the idea arguing that the new regime had still to solve a great number of problems before taking such a step. Lowther noticed the difference in tone between Marschall and Pallavinini regarding the new regime from extreme pessimism to comparative optimism. In the Foreign Office, where suspicion towards Germany was already quite strong, Mallet was sure that Germany was making every effort to bring the Ottoman Empire into the Triple Alliance and that "in the event of European complications, in which England was involved as one of the principals, we should probably have to reckon with Turkey."²

Nicolson, a strong supporter of the Entente and a notorious anti-German assumed his duties at the Foreign Office when Anglo-Ottoman relations were at their lowest point since the Revolution. He admitted the difficulties which were always inherent to the post of Ambassador to the Porte, and "which doubtless have increased under the new order of things." As Lowther

¹Lowther to Nicolson, 11.10.10. Pte. LP. Babington-Smith reported that the German loan already strengthened German influence at the Porte. Babington-Smith to Nicolson, 30.11.10. FO/371/994/44172.

²Lowther to Grey, 6.10.10. no. 709. Minutes. 17.10. ED.IX. i. no. 188.

was at a loss to point to any consistent line of policy, Nicolson thought that it would be better not to follow a rigid line because of the unknown future: "We had better deal with each fresh development of the situation as it arises." Nevertheless, he asked Lowther whether it would be desirable or feasible for the Embassy to establish some relations with the Committee and "to try to speak some words of sense and guidance to them?"¹ Lowther protested that he always was in close touch with them, even with some of the Salonica members. But he admitted that it was impossible to keep in touch with "the more violent" who had recently become prominent. They should not send "lamentations" to the Porte concerning its "iniquities", but should "plod on" week after week with the hope for occasional satisfaction.² Nicolson never again mentioned his idea of re-establishing better relations with the CUP. He had no alternative but to continue with the old line. This was recommended by Fitzmaurice:

On the whole and especially until they gain more experience and sense of proportion the best line seems to be to steer on an even keel in one's relations with them, i.e. not cushing to them and not chiding them while being sympathetic in tone and manner as the Ambassador is. There is no use our being expansively cordial to them as long as they suspect us on account of our friendly relations with Russia; especially if the latter in the future is able and driven to show her teeth.³

Marling suggested a general understanding between the Entente Powers as to their attitude towards the CUP's Government, in view of the Pan-Islamic propaganda. The best weapon could be the closure of Paris and London markets for Ottoman loans for the Porte to pay a greater rate of interest. That this policy had already been applied with success was shown by the "comparatively" reasonable line of the Porte towards Crete and Egypt.⁴

¹ Nicolson to Lowther, 17.10.10. Pte. LP. Nicolson to Goschen, 22.11.10. Pte. HP, 344, Goschen to Hardinge, 19.6.10. Pte. Minutes by Grey and Hardinge, 22.6. HP. 20.

² Lowther to Nicolson, 25.10.10. Pte. LP.

³ Fitzmaurice to Tyrrell, 1.12.10. Pte. GP.79

⁴ Marling to Grey, 7.12.10. no. 885. Secret.

Meanwhile, Macedonia again was looming large. Nicolson was alarmed by the situation since it was now quite clear the Christians would never be granted the equal rights promised to them in July 1908. The Christian could no longer count on European opinion or governments for it was unlikely that any government had: "the slightest intention of taking the initiative in supporting the interests of the Christian population. It is a sad thing to say, but I do not think that I am far from the truth in making such an observation." Britain would be able to take the initiative neither in this case nor in that of the Ottoman-Greek conflict in view of her large Moslem subject population, except if requested to join the six Powers.¹ Nicolson foresaw a very dangerous situation for the near future: "If the present Turkish regime maintains itself, Turkey will become a very powerful and unpleasant factor in that part of Europe. I am afraid that the Christians may even sigh for the old days under the ex-Sultan."² Thus with Nicolson's appointment as the Permanent Under-Secretary in the Foreign Office, the last shreds of sympathy to this new regime had disappeared. "The new regime is going the right way to work, if they wish to keep the Macedonian question open." Mallet added, "If these atrocities continue, the Balkan Committee will reappear on the scene."³

It seems, however, that the crucial evidence as to the true nature of the CUP's rule in Europe arrived only in December. It was the Annual Congress of the CUP held at Salonica between 31 October and 13 November which attracted the attention of the Consuls. The first attempt to obtain information about its secret discussions failed when Lamb, the Consul-General, was misled by the CUP's official publications to believe that the CUP was

¹ Nicolson to Marling, 12.12.10. Pte. NP, 344. Nicolson to O'Beirne, 11.12.10. Pte. ibid. FO to India Office, 16.1.11. FO/371/1015/47123.

² Nicolson to Russell, 12.12.10. Pte., ibid.

³ Findlay to Grey, 20.12.10. no. 163. Secret, minutes, 30.12. FO/371/1000.

"not concerned with questions either of external relations or of internal administration, those being of the exclusive competence of the political party of union and progress and of the Cabinet, which is its embodiment, but is solely occupied with matters relating to popular education, the moral and material development of the country, and the means of perfecting the union between the various elements of the population." He in turn misled Marling, now the Charge, too. Marling, never a great admirer of the Young Turks, concluded: "There can be no doubt that its [CUP] members on the whole are animated with the best intentions, and are desirous of achieving the union and progress of Turkey according to their lights." In the FO Gregory commented that with the exception of the anti-Hellenic boycott, "the Committee appears to be embarking on a more conciliatory policy". Even the more experienced Maxwell was misled: "There is a good deal of vagueness as to the exact policy of the Committee though it seems to be agreed that its intentions are good."¹

Only ten days later, on 17 December, the FO learnt what exactly took place in the Secret CUP Congress. Moreover, its authenticity was proved beyond doubt, as it was obtained from two independent sources: through the French Consul-General at Salonica and the British Vice-Consul at Monastir. These reports finally established that the CUP, far from withdrawing its former policy as the British had been misled to believe, rather decided to continue its former policy of Turcification and Pan-Islamism with more vigour. Marling summarised its policy with both precision and contempt: "Indeed, the whole report breathes precisely the spirit of intolerance at home, and Chauvinism abroad, that might be expected from the secret committee of young inexperienced semi-Asiatics invested with what appears to them to be absolute power unaccompanied by responsibility, but it throws lurid light on the committee's ideas of constitutional government." Indeed, these revelations proved to have a very strong impact in

¹Marling to Grey, 22.11.10. no. 844. Minutes 7.12. FO/371/1017. F. Ahmad in his book on the CUP does not refer to this Congress at all.

the FO, where Gregory, contrary to ten days earlier, regarded the CUP's secret programme as "a very truculent one", and which differed considerably from their published manifesto. It was realised that it was to be "entirely" pro-German and 'markedly reserved' towards the Entente Powers, apart from the continuation of their policy of repression, "possibly extermination", of the Christian elements and active Pan-Islamic propaganda beyond the Ottoman frontiers.¹

Grey found these revelations too important to leave them to the knowledge of the FO only. He decided to send them over to Asquith himself and added cautiously "I think it is premature to assume that the new regime in Turkey will definitely adopt and pursue an oppressive policy, but we must be on our guard against possible developments." Asquith accepted Grey's judgement and decided to circulate Marling's two despatches to the Cabinet. This was naturally the culmination of a series of reports started early in the summer which proved beyond shade of doubt to the FO the true aggressive character of the CUP both at home and abroad.² But, significantly, the FO declined to interfere with Macedonian affairs in view of the Powers' apathy.

At the beginning of 1911 Nicolson thought it would be advantageous to broaden the understanding with Russia in view of the danger from the Pan-Islamic ideas of the CUP, especially to Egypt, because Russia was considered to be the target of Pan-Islam in her southern territories and Turkestan. The hostility in the Foreign Office to the Young Turks was now resolute, but a very cautious policy was needed in order to avoid further aggravation.⁴ Britain had found herself in a position of a complete alienation from the

¹ Findlay to Grey, 7.12.10. no. 158. Secret. Encl. Precis of Despatches from M. Choublier, French Consul-General at Salonica, to M. Pichon. Minutes, 17.12. FO/371/1000. Marling to Grey, 7.12.10. no. 885. Secret. Encl. Geary to Marling, 3.12.10. no. 61 Minutes. 7.12. FO/371/1017.

² Grey to Asquith, 22.12.10. Pte. Minute by Asquith, 30.12. FO/800/100.

³ Marling to Grey, 30.12.10. no. 945. Minute by Nicolson. FO/371/1241. Marling, however, had on 20 December a frank interview with Rifaat in which he criticised the new regime in the strongest terms. Marling to Grey, 20.12.10. no. 918, conf. Grey to Marling, 13.1.11. no. 14. FO/371/1017.

⁴ Nicolson to Buchanan, 3.1.11. Pte. BD, X, i. no. 637. Buchanan to Nicolson, 29.12.10. Pte., ibid. no. 635.

new regime on account of both her interests in the Gulf-Mesopotamia area and because of the pan-Islamic and unconstitutional character of the CUP. But the India Office's advice to launch a strong line in the Gulf was met with firm opposition in the Foreign Office. They decided to abstain from firm action which might have serious consequences for Britain, hoping for an arrangement over the Persian Gulf and Mesopotamian problems. Nicolson made it quite clear that Britain could not afford to quarrel with the Young Turks and preferred agreement to warlike action.¹

Marling thought that the suspension of the negotiations over these questions would allow Britain to gain time for a change of atmosphere in Constantinople in the hope that the pro-German CUP would lose ground. He strongly opposed any financial countenance to the new regime, such as the amalgamation of the National Bank and the Banque de Salonique, both identified with the CUP: "if it [financial aid] is withheld for a few months there is a very fair prospect that the opposition forces at work among the Turks themselves will suffice to defeat the Jewish influence of Salonica and set up a Government independent of them and sincerely serious of working on really constitutional lines. If not the bad elements of the Committee will reassert themselves and the last stage of Turkey will be worse than the first." He suggested that even the forthcoming Paris loan might be suspended, although it was due for road construction, to bring pressure on Djavid and through him upon "the baleful Jew-mason element." But Grey did not think that the prospects of the CUP were so bad and objected.

To attempt to bring down the ruling authority in Turkey by quarrelling with it is a risky policy: if it fails we lose everything if it succeeds it is not certain that we should gain very much from what succeeds it.²

¹ Nicolson to Marling, 9.1.11. Pte., ibid., 347. Nicolson to Cartwright, 9.1.11. Pte., ibid., Nicolson to Goschen, 9.1.11. Pte., ibid. Parker, op.cit.

² Marling to Nicolson, 4.1.11. Pte. ibid. Same to same, 11.1.11. Pte. Minute by Grey, ibid. Marling to Grey, 4.1.11. no. 14. Secret. Minutes. BD.X.ii. no. 6. Same to same, 17.1.11. no. 49. conf., ibid., M.i. no.651. Marling's view regarding British retreat in Koweit were also rejected. Cf. same to same, 17.1.11. no. 50. Secret. BD.X. i. no. 652.

Nothing was further from Britain's mind than participation in an anti-CUP coup. Indeed what did preoccupy the Foreign Office was the damage which the CUP regime could easily inflict upon Europe in general and the British Empire in particular. Although Nicolson was quite aware of the bad omens arising from the Committee's policy in Macedonia, he did not think that the danger was imminent.

More serious was the question of Pan-Islam. The Foreign Office learned about the Pan-Islamic movement and its masonic connections not only from the Embassy but also from Professor Arminius Vambery, who told Nicolson that Britain had "little idea of the extent and force of the new Pan-Islamic movement, and that before long events will occur which will astonish the West." Nicolson asked his friend Hardinge, now Viceroy of India, if the Indian Moslems would cause any serious trouble in the event of an acute crisis between Britain and the Porte over the Gulf and Mesopotamia. Hardinge, already caught by the Pan-Islamic myth, replied that any serious repercussions in India could be avoided by full explanations in the press, though trouble in the Gulf or Mesopotamia might have some effect in India. He himself explained to the Aga Khan, "the head" of the Indian Moslems, that Britain had no expansionist intentions in Persia.¹

Thus, caught between fear of Pan-Islam and pressure from the India Office, the Foreign Office thought that the best line would be "to lead the Turks into a better disposition towards us" by creating a better atmosphere for an understanding over the Baghdad Railway, the Gulf and Mesopotamia. Further quarrels with the Porte might effect the distribution of British naval forces and the situation in Macedonia as well as Egypt and India.² Nicolson thought that the Porte should not be too well provided with funds.

¹ Nicolson to Hardinge, 12.1.11. Pte. NP, 347. Hardinge to Nicholson, 2.2.11. Pte. Ibid. Vambery to Grey, 12.3.10. Pte. VP, 33.

² Nicholson to Buchanan, 17.1.11. Pte. ibid. Nicolson to Goschen, 17.1.11. Pte. ibid.

Here he brought up a completely new argument:

This would only assist towards the creation of a power which, I think, in the not far distant future - should it become thoroughly consolidated and established - would be a very serious menace to us and also to Russia. It would be curious if, in this twentieth century, we witnessed a revival of the Ottoman Empire of the seventeenth century, and there is the additional danger that it would be able to utilize the enormous Mussulman populations under the rule of Christian countries. I think that this Pan-Islamic movement is one of our greatest dangers in the future, and is indeed far more of a menace than the 'Yellow Peril' . . . Germany is fortunate in being able to view with comparative indifference the growth of the great Mussulman military power, she having no Mussulman subjects herself, and a union between her and Turkey would be one of the gravest dangers to the equilibrium of Europe and Asia.¹

In view of the difficulties of coming to an agreement with the Porte on the Gulf and Mesopotamian questions, Lowther thought it was a good thing that the Porte's hands were kept full in Macedonia and the Yemen. He was far from agreeing with Nicolson's speculations of the Ottoman Empire regaining her seventeenth century glory. He further played down the importance of the Pan-Islamic movement and its so-called dangers, since it could only achieve "community of interests" but not "community of religion". The Shia Persian abhorred the Sunni and was unlikely to collaborate with the Ottomans. The Arab*, claimed Lowther, had no respect for the Turk as a Moslem, and moreover, felt that the Caliphate should be in Arab hands. Nor did he regard it as dangerous in India since the Indian Sunnis considered the Young Turks as "sacrilegious revolutionaries" who had deposed "God's elect" from the Caliphate and replaced him with a puppet. Lowther was nonetheless able to supply the Foreign Office with evidence of Pan-Islamic activity.²

Lowther felt that he had to quieten down the anxieties of his Government. The country was still in the throes of the Revolution: "It can hardly be otherwise. It takes more than two years for any country

¹ Nicolson to Cartwright, 23.1.11. Pte. No.347. Nicolson to Lowther, 23.1.11. Pte. Nicolson to Grey, 24.1.11. Pte., *ibid*.

² Lowther to Nicolson, 31.1.11. Pte. LP. Lowther to Grey, 10.2.11. No.93.

*By "Arab" the British meant, in this period, the Arab-speaking people.

to settle down after such an upheaval." Although he was of the opinion that the struggle between the moderates and the extremists was inevitable, he thought that the CUP was not interested now in a row and Hakki would be allowed to "muddle" through. He was extraordinarily optimistic on the thorny Albanian question which could be arranged in "the usual way - baksheesh, decorations, grants of land etc."¹

Lowther, perhaps out of fear that the Embassy might be again, as the previous year, under fire from the Foreign Office, wrote to Nicolson that Fitzmaurice had been viciously attacked by Jahid in The Tanin, the organ of the extremists, for interfering in Ottoman internal affairs. It was untrue that Fitzmaurice had attacked Djavid or the Caliphate. The article itself had aroused "general indignation" among the corps diplomatique and "respectable Turks". The idea behind the attack on Fitzmaurice was to "throw upon this Embassy a suspicion of interference in the internal affairs of the country and of intriguing against the Committee."² It could not be denied that Fitzmaurice's letters had been read with much interest by people like Grey and Morley and often by the Prime Minister himself. Fitzmaurice was the main channel of information for the understanding of the complexities of Ottoman politics. He warned the Foreign Office against treating the Baghdad Railway question as they had been used to in Abdul-Hamid's "pre-economic system of 'out of debt, out of danger'". The CUP did not mind running into debt for the sake of finishing the Railway. He foresaw the possibility of the Ottomans and Germans building the Baghdad-Basra line without Britain if they were unable to achieve favourable arrangement of Koweit, which would restore Ottoman sovereignty there. He was

¹Lowther to Grey, 22.2.11. no. 121. Same to same, 21.2.11. tel. no. 44. Minutes. BD.IX, i, no. 216. For more evidence on the so-called Jewish-Zionist-Freemason plot: Turkey. Annual Report, 1910, in: same to same, 14.2.11. no. 103. Fitzmaurice to Tyrrell, 9.2.11. Pte. GP.80. Lowther to Nicolson, 1.3.11. Pte. LP.

²Lowther to Nicolson, 26.4.11. Pte. (second letter from the same day). LP. encl. secret memo by Fitzmaurice and Jahid's article. Same to same, 3.4.11. Pte. ibid.

ready to hand over Koweit to a liberal Ottoman regime like Hilm's, but not to Dr. Nazim or Ismail Hakki Bey. The general discontent in Macedonia, Albania, Yemen and Arabia might now bring the distintegration of the Ottoman Empire. He regretted that the Young Turks did not realize the value of "moral force" in conducting their internal policy and preferred "brutal methods" which might be their downfall.¹

b. The Question of Albania

The Albanian rebellion which was renewed at the end of March did not incite much anxiety in London. Lowther reassured the Foreign Office that it would not become serious of there was no foreign help to the Albanians, who were "wild talkers, but don't seem really able to accomplish much beyond giving trouble." Nevertheless, the British Government decided to send a Charge d'Affaires to Cettinje because of their lack of information and because of Montenegrin involvement. The Austrians were also quite sure that the Ottomans would defeat the rebels. The Foreign Office was thus led to believe that the Porte would overcome the risings in Albania and the Yemen. Nicolson's confidence of the Young Turks' ability to crush their opponents in the provinces was great indeed:

As soon as they feel their hands free . . . they will, I daresay, turn their attention to Crete and indirectly to Greece . . . I should view with great apprehension the establishment of a strong Turkish military power and the only hope that this eventuality will not arise lies in the possibility of dissensions inside the Turkish Cabinet and also between the Cabinet and the Committee . . . it would be undoubtedly to our advantage if the Extremists were to be definitely excluded from the Government.²

On the Albanian question the British Government preferred to keep neutral between Montenegro and the Porte. Nicolson stated that he would not interfere in Cettinje as he had intervened in the anti-Greek boycott. But

¹Fitzmaurice to Tyrrell, 9.2.11. Pte. op.cit. Marling to Nicolson, 27.6.11. Pte. NP.348.

²Lowther to Nicolson, 4.4.11. Pte. ibid. Goschen to Grey, 1.4.11. tel. no. 10; Minute by Grey, 3.4. Nicolson to Cartwright, 3.4.11. Pte. Cartwright to Nicolson, 13.4.11. Pte. BD.IX.i. no. 471. Nicolson to Hardinge, 19.4.11. Pte. NP.348.

although the Foreign Office already treated the new regime as Britain's enemy, which did not "deserve" any sympathy¹ she still refused to join Russia's representations and preferred to wait until more interested Powers like Austria and Italy did so.²

Although the Foreign Office still retained an unshaken belief in the might of the Ottoman Army, they accepted the view of the Consul in Monastir that "the Christian elements of the population would not be satisfied with any reforms or concessions short of complete emancipation from Turkish rule." A more pessimistic view of the future of the Ottoman Empire gained ground in the Foreign Office who now believed more than ever that unless the Porte changed its policy of Ottomanization, disturbances would spread and could not be dealt with simultaneously, with the results that "the Turkish Empire would find itself threatened with something akin to disintegration."³

In the Foreign Office the success of the moderates in the Ottoman chamber was accepted with considerable scepticism, since it was presumed that the clique of extremists, headed by Talaat, Djavid and Jahid would gain the upper hand in the CUP Congress, the real centre of power. But the resignations of Djavid and Ismail Hakki from the Cabinet was a few days later interpreted as a victory for the moderates like Nail and Abdurrahman Shareef, the new Ministers. The resignation of Ismail Hakki was especially regarded as favourable to Britain in view of his violent anti-British attitude and it was hoped that this would facilitate pourparlers on the Gulf and Mesopotamian questions.⁴

¹Grey to Akers-Douglas (Cettinje) 24.4.11. no. 4. Bertie to Grey, 15.4.11. tel. no. 34. Minute by Mallet, 18.4. FO/371/1228.

²Carwright to Grey, 25.5.11. tel. no. 47. Minutes by Mallet and Nicolson. Bertie to Grey, 27.5.11. tel. no. 68. conf. Minutes.

³Lowther to Grey, 3.5.11. no. 297. Geary to Lowther, 29.4.11. no. 21. Minute by Macleay, 12.5. H. Knatchbull-Hugessen, Memo. respecting the new regime in Turkey, 16.5.11. conf. FO/371/1249/9858.

⁴Lowther to Grey, 23.4.11. tel. no. 99. Minute by Norman, 24.4. Same to same 25.4.11. no. 278. conf. Minute by Macleay, 2.5. same to same, 10.5.11. no. 322. conf. Same to same, 16.5.11. No. 334. conf.

Events moved even more unfavourably for the Porte after the Albanian Mirdites had broken into open revolt. The Foreign Office now listened more than ever to Miss Durham's anti-Ottoman reports. Nicolson's emotional reaction to her "melancholic" letter was an outburst of his hardly-forgotten Turcophobia: "The Turk is always the same and will remain so". Her complaint that "All Gladstone's friends are now the friends of the Turk" found a receptive audience in the Foreign Office. Braham of The Times told Mallet that she was prejudiced and her accounts exaggerated¹. Britain, however, was not ready to act alone. Lowther reported with mistrust the Porte's decision to conciliate the Albanians, for such a line would be "so out of tune with Oriental ideas".² Later in June Britain was ready to work not only for the Powers' guarantee for non-molestation in the event of the Albanians surrendering their arms, but also to fulfil their requests on the questions of language, schools and road improvements. This was obviously a step towards the Albanian demand for wide autonomy. It was; helped by the reinforcement of the credibility of Miss Durham's reports from similar reports by the Vice-Consul at Scutari. The Porte had already expressed its chagrin as to British intervention in the internal affairs of this area.³

At the beginning of June the Foreign Office doubted the Porte's ability to restore order in the Yemen and Albania, after the recent rebuff which the Ottoman Army suffered in the Yemen and with the expansion of the Albanian rebellion for the political horizon seemed to be "considerably disturbed".⁴ The Foreign Office, though denying any intention to initiate

¹ Miss Durham to Spence 30.5.11. FO/371/1228/22229. (Minutes, 8.6) Same to same 4.6.11. ibid. /23037/ Minutes, 14.6. Miss Durham was suspicious of the CUP from the beginning. See her High Albania (London, 1909), p.347.

² Lowther to Grey, 14.6.11. no. 414. conf. BD.IX. i. no. 479.

³ Chiefs of the Albanian Insurgents to Grey, 12.6.11. Minute by Nicolson, 26.6. BD.IX. i.p. 477. Grey to Marling, 10.7.11. no. 188. Marling to Grey, 20.6.11. no. 433. Minute by Macleay, 26.6. Nicolson's interview with Tewfik, 29.6.11. FO/371/1228/25504. There is no clear evidence that Grey's policy in the Albanian question was influenced by his desire to play the role of a "defender of a small people"/^{as} has been implied by S.Skendi, op.cit. p.418

⁴ Nicolson to Goschen, 7.6.11. Pte. NP, 348.

a formal collective representation to the Porte, practically warned the Ottomans that the Albanian question, if not solved, might have repercussions outside the Ottoman Empire. War could be avoided only through an Austro-Russian understanding. Marling favoured European intervention at the Porte to check the extremist line of Talaat's followers. He reassured London that the majority of the CUP regretted the levelling policy, and would not risk any war which might prove fatal for the existence of the Ottoman Empire.¹

At the Embassy at Constantinople, however, there had initially been a considerable indignation over the Foreign Office's decision to intervene at the Porte in favour of the Albanians. But the Foreign Office made up its mind on the final abandonment of the former friendly policy towards the new regime:

we have during the last two or three years been exceedingly tolerant and gentle with the Turks and the result of our benevolent attitude has by no means been satisfactory. [Nicolson wrote to Hardinge] and I do not see that a return to a firmer and less conciliatory attitude, is not likely to make more impression upon the Porte than the course which we have hitherto followed.²

The Foreign Office had no doubts that the Young Turks had behaved "exceedingly badly" in Albania, as there were "actual" eye-witnesses who had so reported to the Foreign Office. The Porte's arguments that the reports had been exaggerated received little serious attention. Nicolson saw ominous developments for the Balkans if the extreme elements of the CUP regained power.³ The spread of the fighting throughout Albania justified Nicolson's apprehensions that it might assume "serious proportions" beyond the borders of Albania. The anxiety of the Austrians that the insurrection might spread, led the British Ambassador to Vienna, Cartwright, to suggest to the Foreign Office that Britain take the initiative, alone or with some

¹Grey to Marling, 6.7.11. tel. no. 261. Buchanan to Grey, 5.7.11. tel. no. 142. Minute by Mallet. 6.7. Marling to Nicolson, 5.7.11. Pte. NP. op.cit Marling to Grey, 5.7.11. no. 464. conf.

²Nicolson to Hardinge, 5.7.11. Pte. NP, op.cit.

³Grey to Marling, 7.7.11. no. 185. Nicolson to Babington-Smith, 10.7.11. Pte. NP, op.cit.

of the Powers. He believed that if the Fleet were sent to Mitylene it would have a sober influence on the "hotheads" at Constantinople. To justify this "moderate" intervention in Albania he suggested they temporarily consent to a slight increase in the Customs dues. But Britain was not ready to depart from her principle that more interested Powers should take the lead.¹

The British Government did little to conceal her critical attitude towards the new regime's activities in its European provinces. The tension between the two countries on the question of the Gulf and the Railway, only strained the relations further. Even the Balkan Committee noticed the change in the British attitude towards the Young Turks. Though this Committee found it necessary to support the demands of the Albanians, they had decided on an attitude of "respect, tempered with vigilance" towards the CUP and regretted that this was not that of the Foreign Office.²

The Foreign Office could not swallow the contradictions of the Balkan Committee in view of the abundant information prejudicial to the Young Turks which reached the Foreign Office not only with regard to Albania, but also Macedonia. At the Foreign Office it was felt that there was "little to choose between the old and the new regime". Marling was still trying to convince the Young Turks not to let their vanity stand in the way of any attempts to solve the Albanian question, but the Foreign Office preferred to rely on the Powers' intervention.³ Meanwhile the Albanian rebellion was nearing its end for it seemed that the Porte was inclined to a conciliatory policy and even Lowther thought that this was the first step towards decentralisation.⁴

¹ Nicolson to Buchanan, 18.7.11. Pte. NP, 349. Nicolson to Goschen, 18.7.11. Pte. ibid. Cartwright to Nicolson, 21.7.11. Pte. ibid. Nicolson to Cartwright, 24.7.11. Pte. ibid.

² Balkan Committee to Grey, 4.7.11. FO/371/1230/26193. The Balkan Committee. Seventh Annual Report of the Executive Committee for the year 1910; presented and adopted by the Annual Meeting, 4.7.11. Minutes, 21.7. FO/371/1250/28490.

³ Marling to Grey, 20.7.11. no. 509. Minute by Norman, 10.8. Marling to Nicolson 19.7.11. Pte. (encl. Lamb to Marling, 15.7.11. Pte.) NP, 349. Same to same, 25.7.11. Pte. ibid.

⁴ Lowther to Grey, 7.8.11. no. 557. For background see Skendi, op.cit.

But the end of the Albanian rebellion was not interpreted as an Ottoman victory. On the contrary the Foreign Office was now more than ever inclined to accept the most pessimistic reports on the future of the new regime and consequently of the Ottoman Empire. The most significant example was Nicolson's promptness in confirming the gloomy views of Milovanovitch, the Servian Prime Minister, on the danger that the break up of the Ottoman Empire would come from within and would be followed by a general attack upon the European provinces of the "crumbling" Ottoman Empire. This was well suited to Nicolson's view that real pacification could not be obtained in Albania so long as the extreme section of the CUP was in power.¹

This [Milovanovitch's view] is not a cheerful forecast, but I daresay it is not far from what may take place. Personally, [wrote Nicolson to Lowther] I should view with great equanimity the break up of the Turkish regime and Turkish Empire in Europe. I have no desire to see either consolidated, or I consider that were they to become strong they could be a menace to every Power with Muhamedan subjects, and especially to us who hold Egypt and India. The Young Turks would never make the lot of the Christians a happy one or accord to his equal right with the Moslem, and the Young Turks have shown that their aims are but little dissimilar from old time methods as abominable as those of Abdul-Hamid.²

Nicolson deliberately concealed from Lowther that Milovanovitch was the source of his information. Lowther found this more depressing even than the news from his most pessimistic informants: "I see no cause for conflagration although discontent will be sure to reign." He wrote:

I entirely agree with you that it is most undesirable that Turkey should become strong, and their very nature will always prevent their being a menace to us. But would it not bother us a lot to see Austria very strong here, and possibly in possession of Salonica, or do you count on Russia stopping that? The collapse of Turkey would offer so many possibilities in the future in the Mediterranean that I will not dare to touch on any of them.³

The situation in the Balkans threatened the revival of the bands in Macedonia and Southern Albania. The Foreign Office was far from happy when informed

¹Cartwright to Nicolson, 1.8.11. Pte. NP, 349. Same to same, 15.8.11. Pte. BD.IX. i. no. 516.

²Nicolson to Lowther, 21.8.11. Pte. LP.

³Lowther to Nicolson, 30.8.11. Pte. ibid.

of the "brutal" treatment to which such bands were subject after capture: "If the Christian Bands avenge this and adopt more aggressive measures, it will be the fault of the Turks". This attitude of the British Government towards the new regime was conveyed to Ismail Hakki (Babanzade), the influential ex-Minister from Baghdad. Mallet rejected his denial of the brutalities which had been committed in Albania.¹

Mallet was also inclined to accept Philip Graves' information on the CUP's intention to continue the Ottomanization policy, if necessary by initiating another revolution, assisted by Germany and Austria.² Lowther, however, transmitted to the Foreign Office with some reservations, a very pessimistic report by Morgan, the Acting Consul-General at Salonica, who suggested that only the accession of a strong Sultan like Mahmud II could save the Ottoman Empire: "This not probable, the sooner Turkey is taken over by a civilised Power, the better for the unfortunate population, of whatever race or creed."³ It was significant that there was no objection in the Foreign Office to Morgan's anti-Ottoman report. They found his report merely "interesting" and did not comment on Lowther's remark: "... if Morgan thought the CUP was so shaky at Salonica, how they still keep power at Constantinople". The Foreign Office, indeed, under Nicolson's guidance, was moving fast towards the most pessimistic view of the future of the new regime. The events culminating in the Tripoli War showed that Britain was much less concerned with the survival of the Ottoman Empire in September 1911 than she had been in April 1909.

c. The Rise of Balkan Nationalism: The Impact on the new regime.

Russia was meanwhile pressing the question of Bulgaria's independence. Although supported by Nicolson, the idea was rejected by the Foreign Office,

¹ Lowther to Grey, 24.8.11. minute by Lindsay, 12.9. FO/371/1262/35807

² P.P. Graves (Times correspondent at Constantinople) to Braham (Times Foreign Editor) 4.9.11. ibid. /36609/ minute by Mallet, 18.9.

³ Lowther to Grey, 3.10.11. no.670. very conf. Morgan to Lowther, 28.9.11. no. 79. m. 18.10.

where Bulgaria's policy was seen as mere bluff. Britain's line remained unchanged: no recognition to Bulgaria before the Porte gave its consent, as it would throw the Ottomans into the arms of Germany and Austria "which it is of the utmost importance to avoid."¹ Few days later it was demonstrated in London that, indeed, no revolution occurred in Britain's policy towards the Porte. "Turks will lean upon the strongest power," wrote Mallet on 20 April, 1909 "and so long as Austria is weak she will lean on Germany. We should be under no illusion in this respect. So long as Turkey has real constitutional Government, we can be perfectly friendly with her, but I do not think that we should make great sacrifice for this friendship".

Hardinge agreed: "We must not sacrifice our interests for the sake of Turkish friendship which is ephermal. Our real stand by is to be found in the confidence of the Turkish people in our justice and fair treatment of all creeds. Our support is also of considerable value to the Constitutional Government."² There was little left of the exaggerated optimism of the British in the immediate aftermath of the revolution. He was "very glad" that the Ottoman-Bulgarian Protocol had been signed, and hoped that it would be soon ratified by the Ottoman Chamber so that Bulgaria's independence might be recognised. While informing Lowther and Buchanan on the Protocol, he omitted mention of his pessimism on the future of Macedonia. This he confided only to Cartwright. The Albanians were the first to confirm this when they mentioned autonomy as a solution.³

Britain's renewed confidence in the Young Turks was once more put to the test. The external dangers which might not have been foreseen in July 1908, were now evident. The CUP's recent victory did not divert the

¹Bertie to Grey, 19.4.09. tel. no. 63. Minutes. FO/371/757

²Nicolson to Grey, 15.4.09, tel. no. 199. Minutes, 16.4.

³Hardinge to Lowther, 20.4.09. Pte. LP. Hardinge to Buchanan, 20.4.09. Pte. HP. 17. Hardinge to Cartwright, 20.4.09. Pte., ibid., Hardinge to Goschen, 20.4.09. Pte., ibid., Hardinge to the King, 21.4.09. Pte., ibid. 18.

Foreign Office from its attempts to achieve a "real alliance" between the Ottomans and the Balkan States in order to prevent a settlement between Austria and the Porte. This was "extremely important", Hardinge impressed upon Lowther, since "it will be a very serious blow to us if she joins the Central Powers."¹

However, the realities of Bulgarian nationalism were too provocative for the Foreign Office to ignore, especially as Izvolsky gave it new encouragement by his recognition of Ferdinand as King of the Bulgarians. Britain remained aloof, criticising the Russian Foreign Minister for this "foolish" action which could bring trouble in the Balkans. There was nothing to do but to hope, as Hardinge did, that in six months time, if the Ottomans kept quite "and put their house in order", they would be strong enough to resist Bulgarian aggression.² But later the Porte was informed that Britain could not act alone in the question of Ferdinand's title. On 17 May he was recognised as Roi des Bulgares.³

It was on their view of the prospects of the Empire, rather than on the actual pursuit of British policy that the Embassy and the Foreign Office differed. This was most striking in the case of Bulgaria. While the Foreign Office view of an Ottoman-Bulgarian Federation leaning towards the Triple Entente was primarily moulded by Anglo-Russian consideration of British policy, Lowther saw considerable complications arising out of a rapprochement between Bulgaria and the Porte.

Lowther did not think that there was really a danger of the Germans regaining the upper hand at Constantinople, since the Young Turks used German flattery only as a lever to push Britain into more friendly action. Hardinge went as far as stating that the Ottomans would find that they had

¹Hardinge to Lowther, 4.5.09. Pte. LP.

²Hardinge to Cartwright, 4.5.09. Pte. HP.17. Hardinge to the King, 4.5.09. Pte., *ibid.*, 18.

³Bertie to Grey, 5.5.09. no. 175. Minute, Lowther to Grey, 9.5.09. no. 329. Minutes, 17.5.

"put their money on the wrong horse" if they leant on the Central Powers.¹
B But with growing German influence, Lowther suggested an intensification of British commercial and financial activity, where Cassel had made an important beginning. For Djavid had declared that despite Germany's growing activity, Britain still occupied the predominant commercial position.²

Sensitivity was indeed shown by the Foreign Office but not when direct British interests were concerned. This was exemplified in the Cretan question, where the British Government tried to avoid crisis by keeping both the engagement to the Porte and that to the Cretans. They agreed to the evacuation of the foreign troops but intended to send them back in the event of disturbances. They further wished to send a stationnaire to guard the Ottoman flag on Suda Island, since they knew the Porte would resist any pressure in favour of union with Greece.³

Although the European part was the greater centre of instability than the Asian, it was only gradually that Britain realized that Balkan nationalism was an increasing danger to the new regime. When the Cretan question created a tension between Greeks and Turks, and Shevket intimated to the Greek Patriarch that his flock was disloyal to the new regime, the Foreign Office showed a distinct impatience to the Greek demands since Britain was more interested in the consolidation of the Ottoman Empire. A "little severity" would do little harm to the Greeks, according to Mallet. Hardinge said that Greek Consuls and priests were acting as if the Ottoman Greeks were Hellenic subjects.⁴ In Crete, however, Britain ambivalently recognised the national aspirations of the Greeks, but not their wish for a Union. At the same time they had no sympathy for a bellicose Ottoman line towards Greece, which could only lose the sympathy of all the Powers for the Porte

¹Lowther to Hardinge, 19.5.09. Pte. LP.

²Lowther to Grey, 26.5.09. no. 384. Memo by T. Hohler. Lowther to Hardinge, 25.5.09. Pte. LP. Block to Hardinge, 16.6.09. Pte. HP. 192.

³Hardinge to Rodd, 28.5.09. Pte., ibid. Same to same, 3.6.09. Pte. ibid., Hardinge to Lowther, 15.6.09. Pte., ibid.

⁴Lowther to Grey, 30.6.09. no. 505. Minutes. Same to same, 13.7.09. no. 548.

and complicate the internal situation.¹

Still, when Milovanovitch exclaimed upon the need for Servo-Bulgarian understanding before the Ottoman Empire's collapse Hardinge maintained that though the Servian statesman might be right as to the possible fall of the CUP, the Ottoman Army would be able to hold its own against the Balkan States. Britain could not approve any conversations of an anti-Ottoman character as the Powers were pledged to maintain the integrity of that Empire. In any case, Findlay, assured the Foreign Office that such an understanding was impossible.² The reply from Hardinge was in sharp contrast to the letter to Graham: "The one hope, however, is that all these aspirations may be knocked on the head by the existence of a strong and regenerated Turkey, who will be able to hold her own against them."³

Lowther advised Rifaat to cultivate good relations with Bulgaria in order to avoid war on two fronts in the event of a war with Greece. But the British Charge at Sofia had reported that troubles over Macedonia must be expected. Attending the celebration of the anniversary of Gladstone's birth at Sofia, he was told that "it is very desirable that there should be no anti-Turkish speeches - not merely on account of your presence there, but in the interests of good relations between Turkey and Bulgaria." He did not take too seriously the Bulgarian and Servian complaints that their "co-religionists" were ill-treated in Macedonia as a result of the new Associations Law. "I dare say this [the maltreatment] is true, but in any case it is very desirable that brigandage should be stamped out." The Balkan States' antipathy to Ottoman revival did not entirely escape the attention of the Foreign Office, where the situation was regarded by Grey as "very ominous."⁴

¹Hardinge to Lowther, 27.7.09. Pte. LP. same to same, 9.8.09. Pte., ibid.

²Hamilton to Grey, 27.9.09. no. 86. conf. BD.IX.i. no. 58. Minutes, 4.10. Findlay to Grey, 27.9.09. no. 90, conf. Minutes, ibid., no. 59.

³Hardinge to Findlay, 5.10.09. Pte. HP.17.

⁴Lindley to Hardinge, 20.12.09. Pte. HP, 192. Hardinge to Lindley, 24.12.09. Pte. ibid. Hardinge to Lowther, 24.1.10. Pte. LP. Whitehead to Grey, 5.1.10. no. 3. conf. Minutes, 17.1. BD. IX. i. no. 88.

Hardinge echoed Lowther's ideas when he said he had expected another upheaval in the Ottoman Empire. The CUP would try to provoke war with Greece in order to divert attention from their failure in the administration. On the other hand he was quite confident as to the strength of the Ottoman Army to forestall any aggression of Balkan nationalism inside or outside the Ottoman Empire.¹ Lowther blamed the Greeks, especially Venizelos, "an Ottoman subject, mixing himself in Greek politics in a fashion adverse to Turkish interests is an intolerable situation." Hardinge, however, rejected his view that Hakki's Government pursued a peaceful policy.²

Hardinge still saw the internal situation in the Ottoman Empire as "far more" dangerous than the deteriorating Greco-Ottoman relations. But because of probable Young Turk resentment, he nevertheless rejected the possibility of British intervention, not "likely to be productive of any good", in favour of the Bulgarian and Serb elements in the Ottoman provinces. The visit of Daneff, the Bulgarian statesman to Macedonia, together with the Ottoman policy of relaxing the suppression of the bands aroused new hope.³ In any case "It is quite possible that the Young Turk regime may fall", Hardinge wrote to Findlay, "but there is little doubt that it would at once be followed by a military dictatorship, which would render any aggressive action on the part of Bulgaria still more dangerous to the latter than the present situation. While the Bulgarians are casting their eyes on Macedonia, it is as well to remember that the Turks also have their eyes rivetted on Eastern Roumelia, I trust that the hopes of both sides may be dashed to the ground for at least some years to come."⁴

There was still considerable hope for an improvement in the Porte's relations with the Bulgarians in view of Hakki's liberal attitude towards

¹Hardinge to Nicolson, 18.1.10. Pte. ibid., no. 95. Hardinge to Cartwright, 11.1.10. Pte. HP, 21.

²Lowther to Hardinge, 1.2.10. Pte. LP. Hardinge to Lowther, 8.2.10. Pte. ibid.

³Hardinge to Rodd, 4.2.10. Pte. HP, 21. Hardinge to Lindley, 24.1.10. Pte., ibid., same to same, 8.2.10. Pte., ibid., Hardinge to Cartwright, 22.2.10. Pte., ibid., Findlay to Hardinge, 16.2.10. Pte. HP, 192.

⁴Hardinge to Findlay, 21.2.10. Pte. HP, 21.

their "co-religionists" in Macedonia for which, he argued, they could no longer complain. It was, moreover, believed that Izvolsky had advised the Bulgarian Government to establish "the best relations" with the Porte.¹

The Foreign Office had supported Hakki's policy towards the Christians in Macedonia from its inception and saw the political activities of the Balkan nationalists as "brigandage" which should rightly be suppressed with severity. It rejected the national aspirations of the Bulgarians as an attempt to disturb the course of the new regime. The diminution of political murder was regarded as an achievement of the new regime. It was even prepared to make its attitude public, as an answer to a Parliamentary question.²

Curiously enough Grey attributed peaceful intentions to King Ferdinand and felt that if war came it would be the Ottomans' fault although Findlay said that the Ottomans were well-disposed. Parker expressed the strong desire of the Foreign Office for the Young Turks to prove themselves successful in the European provinces: "It is hard to believe that the Turks will fail in steering a middle course, so as to conciliate the Christians sufficiently while not offending the Mussulmans." Hardinge preferred to rely on the Ottoman Army as deterrent: "The longer the new regime lasts the stronger will be the Turkish army and the less will be the chances of the Bulgarian army in an attack upon Macedonia."³

Grey found the tension between Greece and the Ottomans even more dangerous in view of the recent revival of Pan-Islamic tendencies under the auspices of the new regime:

¹Hardinge to Lowther, 21.2.10. Pte., op.cit., Hardinge to Nicolson, 2.3.10. Pte. HP. 21. Hardinge to Cartwright, 7.3.10. Pte., ibid., Hardinge to Lowther 21.3.10. Pte., ibid., Hardinge to Findlay, 21.3.10. Pte. ibid. Hardinge to the King, 16.3.10. Pte. ibid.

²Lindley to Grey, 26.1.10. tel. no. 3. Minute by Hardinge, FO/371/998 Grey to Whitehead, 9.2.10. no. 8. Grey to Findlay, 2.2.10, no. 13. McKinnon Wood, Parliamentary Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs, 16.3.10. Parliamentary question by Mr. A. Williams. Hansard. vol. XV. cols. 335-6.

³Nicolson to Grey, 24.2.10. no. 106. Minutes, 28.2. Findlay to Grey, 14.3.10. no. 30. conf. Minutes, 22.3 FO/371/1001. Findlay to Hardinge, 16.3.10. Pte. HP. 192.

We must not be manoeuvred into a Pro-Greek and anti-Turkish attitude. For us to champion Greece against Turkey will create strong Mussulman feeling against us in Egypt, Sudan and India, and the Greeks are so worthless and have been so foolish that there is no claim upon us to be quixotic on their behalf.¹

In fact, viewing the generally unsatisfactory state of Anglo-Ottoman relations² not much was expected in the Foreign Office from the Young Turks. Still, the Porte expected Grey to tell Parliament that the misdeeds in Macedonia were the fault of the local officials and not of the Ottoman Government. Britain refused to do this unless a commission of enquiry severely punished the guilty, but the Foreign Office still did not contemplate representations to the Porte. The Foreign Office was a considerable distance from Buxton and the Balkan Committee, who were still very keen on defending the Young Turks. Grey and Nicolson rejected Noel Buxton's theory that Talaat was conciliatory. Nicolson's opinion was that Buxton was "considerably hoodwinked" by the "moderates" Young Turks. There was no point in trying to convince Buxton as to where the real truth lay, since the Foreign Office could not disclose to him what Talaat and Djavid actually said against Christian equality in Macedonia in the secret sittings of the CUP. The Foreign Office was also influenced by the deep anxiety with which Aehrenthal viewed the situation. "Ahrenthal is not a man who is disposed to exaggerate. [Nicolson wrote to Lowther]. I am a little perturbed that he should view the immediate future at Constantinople with such apprehension."³

Lowther dismissed Aehrenthal's fears as to the future of the Young Turk regime as too alarmist. He even indulged in defending the CUP disappointing as they were, they had made "many mistakes, but they have a terrible difficult

¹ Minute by Grey, 24.9.10. (The Times, 23.9) FO/371/1014/34602

² Lowther to Nicolson, 15.2.11. Pte., ibid., Nicolson to Buchanan, 14.2.11. Pte. NP, 347. Nicolson to Goschen, 14.2.11. Pte., ibid.

³ Nicolson to Lowther, 20.2.11. Pte. BD. IX. i. no. 214. Nicolson to Cartwright, 20.2.11. Buxton's letter to The Times, 15.2.11. Minute by Grey, 20.2. FO/371/1245/6324. For a typical exposition of Buxton's pro-CUP views see: N. Buxton, "Young Turkey After Two Years", Nineteenth Century and After (March, 1911), pp.417-432.

task and might have done worse. I do not suppose any country recovers immediately from a revolution."¹

In Parliament Grey refused to condemn only the Bulgarians as Buxton demanded and took a neutral line by referring to both "Bands and officials." He refuted the allegation, hinted at by Buxton, that the British Government was unfriendly to the new regime, but added that only a "just as well as firm" government would secure a prosperous Ottoman Empire.² It is obvious that the Foreign Office was nearer to Aehrenthal's views, with certain reservations, than to Buxton's. Nevertheless, Grey was ready to give another chance to the Young Turks: "I shall be glad to give as much prominence as possible to any punishments inflicted upon officials guilty . . . or to any steps taken to prevent the recurrence of cruelty when I am informed of them."³ The Young Turks were enraged by Lord Crewe's criticism in the House of Lords of their behaviour in Macedonia, but there were no signs that the Foreign Office regretted this criticism.⁴

d. Britain's Policy of Interests

The relative stabilization achieved in early 1909 meant that the struggle for concessions could be renewed. The Ottoman request for Customs increase faced a rigid British Attitude. Britain decided that this should be used as "a convenient weapon" by which they could either "force" participation in the Baghdad Railway or obtain a rival concession in the Tigris Valley instead of trying to test "how much virtue there is in the new regime" without the 4% weapon.⁵ Hardinge told Djevad, the Ottoman Chargé, that British trade would greatly suffer from such an increase. Here was a part of the "commercial

¹Lowther to Nicolson, 22.2.11. Pte. LP.

²Buxton's Parliamentary Questions, 28.2.11. Hansard, vol. XXII, cols. 180-1

³Minutes on Mallet's interview with Tewfik, 15.2.11. FO/371/1241/6314.

⁴Note communicated by Tewfik, 20.2.11. ibid. /6781/ Hansard, vol. 7, col. 36.

⁵Letter addressed to Mr. Graham respecting Babylonia by Willecocks, 14.2.09. Minutes, FO/371/764. For earlier views: Grey to Lowther, 14.11.08. tel. no. 438. BD.V. no. 446 same to same, 19.11.08. no. 486. ibid., no. 454. Grey to Nicolson, 14.11.08. no. 367.

activity" suggested by Lowther and seen as such both by the Foreign Office and the Embassy. "I pointed out to him [to Djevad]", Hardinge wrote to Lowther, "that we had already done a very great deal to assist the Turkish Government since the revolution that we were still working and doing all we could in their favour, but it was a little hard that we should also be asked to help them at the expense of injury to our trade." The contradiction in their policy was not apparent to the British Government at the time, because it did not exist as far as they were concerned.¹ But the Porte was naturally concerned; Rifaat was "very depressed" because of Hardinge's reply to Djevad on the Customs increase. Lowther warned that "if we make the terms too severe they will round on us and say our sympathy is all froth, but I quite see we must make a bargain with them." The contradiction which might arise as a result of Cassel's National Bank, which the Foreign Office hoped would be "a very important political concern" was also not foreseen at the time.²

It was however only the threat to the British position on the Persian Gulf that was to move the British to representations at Constantinople. The Ottomans occupied the island of Zakhnuniyah, thus disturbing the status quo at Bahrein, under British protection. The India Office had suggested that if the Ottomans remained stubborn, they should be reminded of the British "conciliatory" attitude on the Macedonian Commission and on Crete. Sheikh Mubarak of Koweit was discouraged however by London from interfering in the affairs of Nejd where the Porte was consolidating its power over Ibn Saud.³

¹Hardinge to Lowther, 18.5.09. Pte. LP. Lowther to Grey, 21.5.09, no. 363. Minute by Hardinge, 1.6.09. Hardinge to Block, 28.5.09. Pte. HP.¹⁹²Djevad Bey to Grey, 27.5.09. BD.VI. no. 271. Block to Hardinge, 16.6.09. Pte. op.cit.

²Lowther to Hardinge, 2.6.09. Pte. LP. Hardinge to Gorst, 21.5.09. Pte. HP, 17. On the establishment of the National Bank see: memo by Block, 3.11.08. in: Lowther to Grey, 10.11.08. no. 764. FO/421/245. Hardinge to Block, 17.11.08 Pte. HP, 13. Hardinge to Lowther, 17.11.08. Pte. LP. Hardinge to Bertie, 5.11.08. Pte. HP, 13. Block to Hardinge, 8.2.09. Pte. HP. 192.

³India Office to Foreign Office, 26.5.09. FO/371/19944. Grey to Lowther, 30.5.09. no. 328. B.C. Busch, Britain and the Persian Gulf, 1894-1914 (Berkeley, 1967), pp.319 - 322.

Looking for further concessions from the new regime the British Government hoped that Messrs. D'Arcy, a British syndicate, would obtain the oil concessions for the Mosul and Baghdad regions. The Foreign Office informed Lowther that Britain would support only predominantly British groups, but the question remained academic as the Porte delayed the decision.¹

But of all questions of British interests the one of railway and navigation promised to be the most thorny. Lowther was very hopeful that the Porte would ask the Germans for more favourable terms for the section of the Baghdad Railway to Aleppo, while welcoming British competition for that beyond Helif. He hoped that the Lynch Company would meanwhile secure the monopoly for the Rivers navigation and the concession for irrigation would be gained thus avoiding passing Mesopotamian sections of the Baghdad Railway into exclusively Germany hands.² Britain sought to strengthen and consolidate her position in Mesopotamia. The first steps indicated the inauguration of moderate policy. The decision not to connect the Railway question with the Customs increase, was not only a result of pressure from Lowther and Block, but also the outcome of the decision of the Interdepartmental Committee on Mesopotamian Railway who were reminded that both Austria and Germany had already agreed to the Customs increase without conditions, and if Britain made difficulties her position at Constantinople would suffer. The Committee, for economic reasons, preferred the Baghdad-Basra railway to the Baghdad-Mediterranean one. Hardinge and Grey were not very happy about the Committee's conclusion, but they yielded to it.³

Thus on 18 August Lowther was instructed to apply to the Porte for a concession for a railway via the Tigris from Baghdad to the Gulf and for a first option for a railway to the Mediterranean should the development of

¹Lowther to Grey, 21.6.09. tel. no. 212, same to same, 17.8.09. no. 674 Minutes. Marling to Grey, 1.12.09. no. 931.

²Lowther to Grey, 11.8.09. Pte. LP. Lowther regarded Gwinner's article "The Baghdad Railway and the Question of British Cooperation". Nineteenth Century and After (June, 1909), pp.1083-1091, as a feeler calling for Britain's cooperation in the Baghdad Railway. Lowther to Hardinge, 19.6.09. Pte. op.cit

³The Report of the Committee on Mesopotamian Railways was submitted on 24 July. Minutes, 27.7. FO/371/762.

irrigation and trade in Mesopotamia render it desirable.¹ When Lowther approached Hilmi on 13 September, the latter told him that granting such a concession would make Germany resentful, and she would take revenge by seizing every opportunity to punish the Porte, and the Ottoman Empire would have to rely more than ever" on Britain. But this did not alarm London: "If the concession has the effect of increasing the dependence of Turkey on G. Britain so much the better" Mallet wrote calling for a stiffer attitude towards the Porte in the Customs increase question. Hardinge also recommended that they use these two questions as a leverage against the Ottomans. The final reply which Hilmi gave to the British application could be regarded as "a good indication of the attitude of the Turkish Government" to Britain. The application for the Customs increase could be used to re-establish Britain's position in Mesopotamia which had been "seriously imperilled by the undisguised hostility of the late regime. Britain's consistent support for the new regime certainly entitled them, so they felt in London, to the concession, and Hardinge wrote: "The moment seems to me an important one, since we have done a very great deal for the Turks during the past eighteen months, and so far have received absolutely nothing in return."² As he was to emphasize some three months later: " . . . it is now time for them to show their gratitude in a practical form."³

On 23 September, the Foreign Office officially submitted its conditions for agreement to the 4% Customs increase. These did not include the railway concession to the Gulf but stipulated the lifting of the embargo upon Egypt's borrowing powers; the money from the 4% Customs increase was not to be used

¹Grey to Lowther, 18.8.09. No. 245. Secret, BD. VI. no. 272.

²Ibid. and Grey to Lowther, 23.9.09. no. 298.

³Hardinge to Block, 13.12.09. Pte. HP.17.

for the Baghdad Railway; one third of the loan guaranteed by this increase should be offered for subscription in London; and the Porte must fulfil the terms of 3% increase of 1907.¹

The British Ambassador reacted strongly when informed of the Porte's unsatisfactory reply on both the Baghdad-Gulf and the Lynch concession for the Rivers navigation. Rifaat was told he could not expect Britain always to do things for "les beaux yeux de la Turquie" and never receive anything.² Pichon, the French Foreign Minister, well understood Britain's "self contradictory" attitude. For while she expressed readiness to assist the new regime in improving its administration, she asked special advantages for herself.³ Hardinge told Tewfik that in fact Britain had no desire to build the Tigris Railway if she were granted the control and the construction of the lower section of the Baghdad Railway.⁴ The difficulties which faced Britain's ambition to re-establish her supremacy and prestige in Mesopotamia and the Gulf, were emphasised by Metternich, the German Ambassador in London, who described the southern part of the Baghdad Railway as the "most valuable part of the whole line".⁵

In spite of the difficulties, the Foreign Office could not detect systematic tendency by the Porte of leaning towards the Triple Alliance. When such an idea was suggested in some Viennese newspapers, Hardinge did not dismiss it out of hand. He realized that this might "eventually" be the case owing to German influence in Ottoman military circles, but it was not imminent because Germany was still regarded with suspicion at Constantinople.⁶

¹ Memo communicated to Tewfik, 23.9.09. BD. VI. App. VI. The Gulf line concession was mentioned only verbally. Lowther to Grey, 27.9.09, tel. no. 335, minute by Hardinge. FO/371/764.

² Lowther to Grey, 27.9.09, tel. no. 335, op.cit., Lowther to Hardinge, 27.9.09. Pte. LP.

³ Bertie to Grey, 8.10.09, no. 402. Minutes

⁴ Hardinge to Lowther, 5.10.09. Pte. LP.

⁵ Grey to Goschen, 28.10.09, no. 266. Secret, BD. VI. no. 277.

⁶ Same to same, 8.11.09. no. 180. Minute by Hardinge, 10.11.

The rivalry with Germany was confined to the future construction of the Mesopotamian railways, where Britain had decided to adopt a stiff line towards the Porte. Hardinge argued that the chances of obtaining British participation in the Baghdad Railway had until now been hopeless because of the Kaiser's hostility. Now Britain, with two cards in her hands, a quotation on the Paris Bourse, and the 4% Customs increase, was in a "very strong" position.¹ The Foreign Office was ready to give way on the question of Egyptian borrowing powers as this might unite the "chauvinists" against Hilmi, but their attitude on the extra 4% grew stiffer when the Baghdad Railway negotiations came to an impasse. Rifaa represented official Ottoman disappointment when he stated that the Powers had now an opportunity to show their good-will, instead of using a policy of "cutlet for cutlet". But Britain was inhibited by her obligations to discuss the Railway question only on a quatre basis, and she could not agree to other articles of the 1903 Convention, such as the Kilometric guarantees or the clause about ports in Baghdad and Basra.² The difficulties raised by the Germans made Grey an enthusiast for a while for Willcocks' scheme for a Baghdad-Mediterranean railway which could then be prolonged to the Gulf, thus making the Baghdad Railway beyond Mosul as well as the Lynch Rivers Navigation unnecessary. The Baghdad Railway was now about to cross the Taurus with the German announcement of the construction of the Bulgurlu to Helif section.³ Kautz, the Director of the Baghdad Railway, told Fitzmaurice on 23 November that by insisting that the 4% extra Customs duties must not be utilized for the Railway the British Government had "declared war" on it. The Porte was now looking for other sources to finance further sections of the Railway.⁴

Marling thought that Germany's readiness to come to an agreement with Britain over the Baghdad Railway was a result of their failure to regain

¹Hardinge to Marling, 2.11.09. Pte., op.cit., same to same, 16.11.09. HP.192

²Lowther to Grey, 19.10.09. no. 861. Minutes, 25.10. FO/371/763. Marling to Grey, 31.10.09. tel. no. 346. Minutes, 1.11.

³Minutes by Hardinge and Grey, 6.11.09. BD.VI, no. 281. Marling to Grey, 5.11.09. no. 889. ibid. 280.

⁴Same to same, 24.11.09. Secret, no. 933, ibid., no. 295.

their predominance at Constantinople against Britain. Marling also relied on the opposition of the Ottoman Chamber to the 1903 Railway Convention.¹ When von Schoen, the German Foreign Secretary, told Goschen, the British Ambassador, that German public opinion would demand quid pro quo from Britain for the Lynch monopoly and the Baghdad-Gulf railway, Hardinge rejected it as "very typical of German methods". For Grey the concession for the Baghdad-Gulf line was only a compensation for the "damage" which could be done to the British navigation interest below Baghdad, should the Germans obtain the exclusive right to build it. After Cassel's conversations with the Gwinner the British Government was convinced that it was better to give in on the question of the kilometric guarantees than lose control of the Baghdad-Gulf line, which had at least to be 55%. The political advantage of this line to Britain made it more important than the Baghdad-Mediterranean one, because of its proximity to the Gulf and India.²

On the question of Koweit the Porte promised the British Ambassador not to raise it in the Ottoman Chamber after its instigation in the press by Austria and Germany. Lowther warned the Foreign Office that the question should be treated with "great caution" for "It must be very carefully borne in mind that Turkish rights and claims bear a very different complexion now from what they did under the old regime, and will need to be treated with great circumspection so long as the new order of things lasts, or at all events until we see clearly the groove into which the new regime will settle."³ The matter became more complicated when the Sheikh of Koweit wanting to enlarge his estates, was asked by the Wali of Basra to become an Ottoman subject. The Foreign Office was ready to support the Sheikh as the Porte was still uncompromised over the

¹ Marling to Grey, 13.12.09, no. 966. BD. VI. no. 307. Hardinge to Goschen, 8.12.09. Pte. HP.¹ Hardinge to Marling, 14.12.09. Pte., ibid.

² Goschen to Hardinge, 14.12.09. Pte. tel. Minutes by Hardinge and Grey, 15.12. FO/371/763/45560. Cassel to Hardinge, 20.12.09. Memo and minutes, 21.12. BD. VI. no. 309. Hardinge to Goschen, 20.12.09. Pte. HP, 17. Hardinge to Block, 13.12.09. Pte. ibid.

³ Lowther to Grey, 28.2.09. no. 138. Minute by Tilley. FO/371/768.

Baghdad Railway question. Lowther suggested that until the new regime settled down they leave the matter alone and the Foreign Office agreed that now the Sheikh could manage his own business better than Britain could for him.¹

The Foreign Office's support to Lynch's Euphrates and Tigris Steam Navigation Company for a renewal of their concession under the new regime was another lever in Britain's struggle to acquire influence in Mesopotamia. The Porte refused Lynch a monopoly and suggested that 50% of the shares to British and 50% Ottoman, with control in British hands for 75 years. Hilmi was still assailed in the Chamber by Sassoon Effendi and the Arab deputies for granting such a generous concession. Sassoon offered a more favourable project and the Porte accepted it. Britain was ready to agree to the new offer when Halajian, Minister of Public Works under German guidance, raised new difficulties. Hilmi gave an emphatic assurance to Lowther that he would resign if a satisfactory arrangement were not reached. Lynch himself claimed that a plot had been prepared by Sassoon and the Germans to remove his Company from the Rivers. This danger was imminent because the Hamburg-America line had established a regular line to the Gulf.²

Marling supported Lynch's apprehensions as to the danger to British schemes and influence to Mesopotamia. He also blamed the deputies from Baghdad for organising "a formidable campaign" in Young Turkish circles against the British, where it was said that the Lynch scheme, the projected British railways and Willcocks scheme were all a "prelude to political designs on Mesopotamia and in Arabia in the future". Mallet saw this opposition as a "determined effort" to block concession to Lynch and the British railway. The only move possible was unofficially to hint to the Porte that consent could not be given to the 4% Customs increase.³ Willcocks himself was accused of giving to Lynch's

¹ India Office to F.O., 15.3.09, ibid., same to same, 22.4.09. FO/371/768/15288. Grey to Lowther, 3.5.09, no. 130. Lowther to Grey, 28.5.09, no. 396. Minutes. Grey to Lowther, 12.7.09. no. 199.

² Lowther to Grey, 13.9.09. tel. no. 320. FO/371/759. Same to same, 15. 9.09. tel. no. 324. Minutes. Same to same, 21.10.09. tel. no. 343. Lynch to Lowther, 28.10.09. FO/371/760/39912.

³ Marling to Grey, 31.10.09. tel. no. 345. Minutes, 1.11.

concession "a stab in the back" by stating publicly that the Euphrates would dry up as a result of the irrigation. Hardinge described him as "irresponsible enthusiast" who had done as "incalculable harm".¹

Hilmi's policy was approved by the Chamber on 13 December, but since the British Government insisted on compensation in the event of the River drying up, he could not persuade the Chamber on this point.² The schism between the civil and the military sections of the CUP also weakened Hilmi's Cabinet and he tendered his resignation on 28 December. In the Foreign Office it was hoped that Djavid and Taleat would remain in office.³ Britain found herself supporting Hilmi and the CUP against the machination of the German Embassy which was working for the overthrow of Young Turk influence, which would, Mallet maintained, threaten Britain's position on the Baghdad Railway.⁴

The Hakki Cabinet, which replaced Hilmi's on 31 December, presented difficulties for British policy in Mesopotamia. Hardinge was now "very sceptical" as to the possibility of obtaining the Porte's consent to British control and construction of the Baghdad-Gulf line. But, together with the abolition of the embargo on Egyptian borrowing power it was to be a sine qua non for her consent to the 4% Customs duties increase.⁵ He nevertheless pointed out that Britain had no intentions on Mesopotamia for it would have been very easy to have realized them at various epochs of the late regime. "Ludicrous" though this might be, Marling admitted the difficulties of so convincing the Porte, for "there is only one thing more difficult than getting an idea into a Turk and that is to get one out." All they could do was lie low until the

¹ Same to same, 7.11.09. tel. no. 352. Minute by Hardinge, 10.11. Hardinge to Marling, 16.11.09, Pte., op.cit. Tewfik's Memo. 5.11.09. FO/371/760/40850. Minute by Hardinge, 6.11.

² Marling to Grey, 14.12.09. no. 973. Same to same, 21.12.09. no. 975. Minutes.

³ Same to same, 6.12.09. no. 949. Same to same, 21.12.09, no. 989, conf. same to same, 29.12.09, tel. no. 366. Minute by Mallet. Lowther to Grey, 1.1.10. no.8

⁴ Same to same, 14.12.09, no. 967, very conf. minute by Mallet, 22.12.

⁵ Hardinge to Nicolson, 5.1.10. Pte. BD.VI. no. 316. Hardinge to Gorst, 7.1.10. Pte. HP.21.

"prejudice" against Lynch died down.¹

The Foreign Office attributed the impasse over the advancement of British interests in Mesopotamia to Ottoman "chauvinism" and German rivalry. The recent loan given to Koweit might indeed confirm the Porte's suspicions of "designs" on Mesopotamia.² Britain opposed not only the German monopoly in the southern section of the Baghdad Railway, but also the Porte's scheme to give to the German Company the excess of the tithes for the kilometric guarantees for the Helif-Baghdad section, as this would damage British trade. Rifaat accused Britain of obstructing the completion of the Railway, and said the Porte might build the southern section alone. Lowther attributed this tougher line to the growing influence of the military. Rifaat even talked of the only solution being in the abandonment of the Customs duties increase. The Germans also took an uncompromising line in the Railway question, for them an "Imperial idea" and a "great national undertaking".³ Hardinge claimed that this German ambition would have ominous repercussions in Europe leaving Germany "mistress of the European continent". Germany wished to use the railway question as a lever to obtain Anglo-German agreement but the Foreign Office considered the German plan "inadmissible" and it was suggested that Britain again press for a concession on the Tigris line to the Gulf. The German suggestion was seen as an attempt to isolate Britain from her Russian and French friends.⁴ The situation also brought an aggravation of Anglo-Ottoman relations. The Ottoman Ambassador was told that the Porte was acting in "complete disregard" of British interests and was not fulfilling the promise to modify the 1903 Convention, "in spite of all the HMG had done to assist the new regime, and of the friendly and even enthusiastic support, both moral

¹ Hardinge to Lowther, 11.1.10. Pte. HP (192). Lowther to Grey, 10.1.10. no. 21. Secret. Memo by Marling. Board of Trade to Foreign Office, 4.3.10. FO/371/991/768. Hardinge to Goschen, 18.1.10. Pte. HP, 21. Lorimer to Lowther, 31.1.10. conf. in: Lowther to Grey, 2.3.10. no. 125. Minute by Hardinge, 16.3. FO/371/996.

² Babington-Smith to Hardinge, 8.2.10. Pte. BD.VI. no. 322. Hardinge to Babington-Smith, 12.3.10. Pte., *ibid.* no. 323. Grey to Goschen, 31.3.10. no. 80. *ibid.*, no. 337. Goschen to Grey, 12.1.10. no. 10. Minute.

³ Lowther to Grey, 2.4.10. no. 197. BD.VI. no. 339. Goschen to Grey, 8.4.10. no. 99. Very conf., *ibid.*, no. 342. Goschen to Hardinge, 23.4.10. Pte. *ibid.*, no. 353.

⁴ Goschen to Grey, 8.4.10. no. 99, very conf. Minutes, *opcit.*, same to same, 11.4.10. no. 102, very. conf. Minutes. *ibid.*, 334.

and material, which had been extended by this country to Turkey, more especially during the crisis of 1908-1909." Grey was ready to give to the Porte the most binding assurances that no political interest was involved in the application for the concession. Britain could not, Grey commented in April 1910, remain indifferent to her economic position in Mesopotamia, the political situation in the Gulf or the "important influence" it would have on India. Hardinge argued that the new regime by refusing to modify the 1903 Convention smoothed the way for German monopoly and in an economic exploitation of the Empire, and thus raised a suspicion as to the sincerity of her attempt at financial regeneration. Lowther was instructed to renew the application for the Tigris railway to be built nominally by an Ottoman Company.¹ Lowther, however, was sceptical on Britain's position in the Baghdad Railway since the Army, influenced by the Germans, was determined to complete the line to Baghdad. He doubted that financial pressure would be helpful. Britain's policy seemed to help the Germans more: "Germany's threats seem to carry a good deal more weight than our protestations of a friendly attitude." For his criticism he earned Hardinge's reproach.²

The Foreign Office believed that a strong line would strengthen the hands of those like Djavid who did not favour the continuation of the Baghdad Railway on the 1903 conditions. When Lowther applied again for the Tigris concession, on 3 May, Rifaat told him that the Porte was morally bound to build the line as far as Baghdad, and as for the southern section of the line they would try to obtain the right to build it from the Germans, which was regarded as rather "childish" in the Foreign Office. This became even more improbably when, according to Block, Djavid gave way to the military

¹Minute by Grey, *ibid.*, p.461. Grey to Lowther, 18.4.10. no. 96. Secret. *ibid.*, no. 350. Same to same, 20.4.10. no. 107. Secret, *ibid.*, no. 352. Goschen to Grey, 22.4.10. no. 117, minute by Mallet.

²Lowther to Hardinge, 19.4.10. LP. Pte. Hardinge to Lowther, 26.4.10. Pte. *ibid.*

party, which regarded the completion of the Baghdad Railway as of particular importance.¹ The crux of the problem was that Germany had also put pressure on the Ottomans and the Porte claimed that two parallel lines would not pay. The German Ambassador berated the British Liberal Government as more imperialist than the former Conservative one, who had only asked for a port on the Gulf.²

The CUP policy of centralization threatened not only Britain's position in Mesopotamia, but also her more important one on the Persian Gulf where the Porte wanted to re-establish Ottoman prestige and authority. The first to feel the effect of this were the Sheikhs of Koweit and Mohammara. The opinion in the India Office and the Foreign Office was that strong action would soon become necessary since the privileged status of these two British "proteges" were under Hakki's regime in danger more than under Hilmi's. Furthermore, so long as the Baghdad Railway question was not settled Britain had to protect this area. The Sheikh of Koweit was even suspected of having a double allegiance, thus strengthening the need for British interference. But Mallet maintained that for practical reasons a modus vivendi had to be found, pending a final settlement, since no strong and effective action could be recommended:

There may be inconveniences in this course, but we have hitherto gained nothing by complaisance to Turkey, whereas Austria, who filched from them two provinces, is on the best terms with them, as Sir G. Lowther points out. On the other hand, Austria is a powerful and dangerous neighbour and is able to put pressure on Turkey whereas we cannot do anything beyond occupying the Customs houses of an island or two.³

It was agreed in the Foreign Office that if possible ships-of-war should not be sent to the head of the Gulf, in order not to give to "the Turkish chauvinists" a pretext for the immediate purchase of gunboats for the Gulf.

¹Lowther to Grey, 2.4.10. no. 197, minute by Mallet. FO/371/991. Same to same, 3.5.10, no. 276. Secret, BD.VI. no. 359. Minute by Mallet. FO/371/992. Block to Hardinge, 3.5.10. ibid., 16572.

²Grey to Lowther, 13.5.10. tel. no. 103. Secret, BD.VI. no. 336. Gwinner to Cassel, 21.5.10. ibid., no. 370. Grey to Goschen, 31.5.10. no. 148. Secret, ibid., no. 375.

³India Office to Foreign Office, 2.8.10, minutes, 3.8. FO/371/1010/28116. Same to same, 11.8.10. Minutes, 12.8., ibid./29259/ Lowther to Grey. 10.10.10. no. 720.

These encroachments, and further ones on the special status of the Residency at Baghdad, resulted in a very strong reaction in the India Office and the Foreign Office. The change of rulers had, it was argued in London not brought about any change of Government.¹

The Foreign Office now felt that a more determined line would soon be necessary in face of Ottoman encroachments on the British position on the Gulf. The situation worsened when the Vali of Baghdad appointed a Mudir at El Odeid at the Trucial Coast. Parker, following the India Office, demanded immediate action, otherwise British prestige there would be damaged. The Admiralty should be informed of this development in order to make preparations for landing forces for "The effect of unhesitating action at Odeid may be salutary elsewhere." A serious clash was avoided only because it was discovered that the Government of India was misinformed.²

As to financial assistance, Nicolson regretted that the Ottoman-French loan negotiations had failed since he was sure that now the Young Turks would apply to the Germans which would further increase German influence. But the basic policy remained for: "If the matter had been left to us, we should have preferred to have starved the Turks as regards money which might have rendered them more amenable in treating of the various questions pending between them and us. They are at this moment very disagreeable to us in many quarters, and the sympathy with the new regime appears to me to be considerably on the wane."³ There was no question of Britain's agreeing with Hakki that capital should have no flag.⁴

The Cabinet crisis at Constantinople between Shevket and the Committee now offered another opportunity for the Foreign Office to discourage any

¹ Same to same, 16.8.10. Minutes, 17.8. FO/371/1013/29914. Grey to Lowther, 20.8.10. tel. no. 212.

² India Office to Foreign Office, 6.9.10. Minutes, 7.9. FO/371/1014/32605. Minutes by Parker and Mallet, 20.9.10. ibid./34279/. Lowther to Grey, 30.9.10. no. 694. Minute. Marling to Grey, 15.11.10. tel. no. 249.

³ Nicholson to Goschen, 26.10.10. Pte. HP. 344.

⁴ Lowther to Grey, 25.10.10. no. 478.

financial assistance to the Porte. London decided to remain neutral and await the development of events.¹

At the end of October the India Office pressed the Foreign Office for firm action with regard to Ottoman "agression" in the Persian Gulf. But in the Foreign Office only Parker supported the strong line, as such an attitude over the Ottoman-Egyptian frontier dispute in 1906, had produced "excellent" results: "I firmly believe that if we showed our teeth the whole situation at Constantinople would change." Grey, however, was not prepared to take such a line, supporting in practice Lowther's ideas of "piecemeal" representations and financial starvation.² The delay in the evacuation of Zakhnumiyah and the Ottoman encroachments upon the partial autonomy of the Sheikhs Khazal and Mubarak, irritated the Indian authorities who pressed the Foreign Office for strong action. In fact the British Government was limited in its action. Marling, pointed out to the "very anomalous nature" of Britain's relations with the local chieftains since she had only "very little" locus standi. The basic difficulty was that the British Government treated the Porte as a constitutional government, although their constitution was now no more than "a fraud and a sham". This could not be said to the Young Turks without causing a serious rupture. The most that the British Government could do was the occasional visit of British ships to see that the status quo in the Gulf was maintained: "visits of that kind though quite harmless get immensely magnified in the mind of the local official, and no objection can be taken to them."³

Grey and Nicolson felt that Britain could only adopt a moderate line in the Gulf because of fear of Pan-Islamic propaganda. Nicolson admitted that the India Office and especially the British Resident in the Gulf were ~~clumsy~~

¹ Nicolson to Bertie, 14.11.10. Pte. BP¹⁸⁰ and Nicolson to Goschen, 14.11.10. Pte. NP. 344.

² India Office to Foreign Office, 28. 10.10. Minutes, 31.10. FO/371/1015/39310.

³ India Office to F.O., 9.12.10. FO/371/1004/44632. Foreign Office to Admiralty, 14.12.10. ibid., Admiralty to Foreign Office, 21.12.10., ibid. Minute by Mallet, 23.12. Marling to Nicolson, 20.12.10. NP, op.cit.

clamouring for action in view of the waning British influence, but

any action for a determined character which we might take in those regions would produce a very far-reaching effect and, were we to alienate the Turkish Government by any acts of force, we might feel the effects pretty soon in Egypt and Persia, and perhaps even in India.¹

It was assumed in the Foreign Office that the prospect for an agreement on the Railway and the Gulf questions would be more remote if a military dictatorship replaced the present regime.²

If a dangerous situation might soon develop at Constantinople and the provinces, they could do no better than pursue "a passive and expectant policy". The new storms which were looming ahead of the new regime led Nicolson to doubt the possibility of Britain's ever obtaining absolute control over the Baghdad-Gulf section. He suggested that Britain should now concentrate her efforts in fortifying her position at the terminus at Koweit.³

On 1 March 1911 Rifaat presented the Ottoman proposals on the Baghdad Railway. The Foreign Office found both the offer of only a 20% share in the Gulf-Baghdad line, and the Ottoman demand for direct control of the terminus at Koweit for the Porte disappointing. Britain was ready to retreat in the question of the Railway but not on the terminus. Mallet thought that Britain should not participate in bringing the Railway down to the Gulf as it was doubtful whether such a line would be beneficial to British trade. From the strategic point of view he argued that "the longer the day is put off when Turkish troops will be able to mass themselves at the head of the Gulf, the better for the maintenance of our interests". Parker reflected the Foreign Office's feeling in his rejection of the sharp anti-Ottoman tone of the Indian Government as a "tactical mistake" which amounted to slamming the door. He also admitted that although the Ottoman proposals were unacceptable the negotiations per se were important. He was optimistic as to the

¹Nicolson to Marling, 12.12.10. Pte. NP.344.

²Cartwright to Grey, 19.2.11. tel. no. 12. most conf. Minutes. BD.IX.i. no. 213.

³Nicolson to Goschen, 20.2.11. Pte. Nicolson to Lowther, 20.2.11. Pte. NP, 347. Lowther to Grey, 14.2.11. tel. no. 38. Minutes BD.X.ii, no. 12.

possibility of coming to a satisfactory "diplomatic adjustment" on the questions of Koweit, El Katr and the Baghdad Railway.¹ Nicolson was also disappointed that the Porte had not yet received the consent of the German Government for British predominance in the Gulf line. It would obviously be regarded as a diplomatic defeat for Britain if a 60% share went to the Porte and Germany. Thus Nicolson promised not to compromise on the question of the 4% Customs increase until a satisfactory arrangement was achieved.² Little notice was taken of British supporters of the new regime like Noel Buxton and Block, who sided with the Porte in these matters.³

The real question now was the opposition of the Government of India to the Porte. Nicolson felt that the Foreign Office must attach great importance to the views of the Government of India. This did not promise easier negotiations with the Porte. Hardinge, who was "very sick" at the Ottoman reply, shared Nicolson's theory on Germany's desire to dominate Europe, demanded a firm attitude on the Gulf, especially at Koweit, where Germany stood behind the Porte. Any concession, he claimed, would encourage the latter towards further encroachments in the Gulf area. Hardinge called on the Foreign Office to defend the Sheikh of Koweit, "at any cost", since as he admitted he felt intensely the importance of British predominance in the Gulf: "I would far rather see the line stop at Basra ...". Lowther, however, was afraid that Hardinge and the India Government would be "very sticky" about the Railway negotiations.⁴ Indeed, this uncompromising line of the India Office added to the difficulties expected from the Porte, caused some anxiety at the Foreign Office. Parker warned that in the event of a disagreement between the Porte

¹Lowther to Grey, 1.3.11, no. 52. Minutes, BD.X.ii. no. 14. India Office to Foreign Office, 3.3.11. Minutes, 4.3. FO/371/1231/7880.

²Nicholson to Lowther, 6.3.11. Pte. LP. Nicolson to Goschen, 6.3.11. Pte. NP.347. Nicolson to Cartwright, 6.3.11. Pte. ibid. See also: Fitzmaurice to Tyrrell, 9.2.11. Pte. GP. 80. Fitzmaurice adopted now a hard-line in these matters. Compare his views before the Revolution. Same to same, 12.4.08. Pte. op.cit.

³Hansard, vol.XXII. cols. 1300, 1328-9. Lowther to Grey, 22.3.11. no. 184. Minute by R. Macleay, 27.3.

⁴Nicolson to Lowther, 20.3.11. Pte. LP. Hardinge to Nicolson, 29.3.11. Pte. BD.X.ii. no. 25. Lowther to Nicolson, 29.3.11. Pte. LP. RC. Lindsay, Turkish Aggression in the Persian Gulf. Memo prepared for the CID. 6.3.11. Minutes. FO/371/1245/8429. Hardinge to Bertie. 5.4.11. Pte. BP.180.

and Britain, the Ottoman policy of "pinpricks" in the Gulf would, accompanied by Moslem agitation in Egypt, become more frequent:

we may be in a situation bordering on war with Turkey. To judge by the recent Turco-Italian incident in the Red Sea it seems that Turkey would climb down if we really showed our teeth, as she did at the time of the Akaba incident: but we are not in quite such a good position as Italy, because of our large Mussulman population . . before very long we may be faced with a Fashoda incident with Turkey or continual submission to her claims.

Eyre Crowe argued that agreement with Germany on the Railway should be made simultaneously with an agreement with the Porte, to avoid any possible intrigues on Germany's part. The Foreign Office moved slowly now towards the idea, recommended by both the Board of Trade and the India Office, for a minimum demand of 50% participation in the Baghdad-Gulf line, on condition that Koweit and not Basra, was the terminus.¹ The whole problem was further complicated when some natives of Bahrein were arrested for refusing to take out Ottoman passports as demanded by the Vali of Basra. The Foreign Office's reaction was an immediate and "very strong" protest to the Porte, otherwise they felt, the negotiations over the Baghdad Railway and Gulf questions would become impossible. Lowther suggested that they give the British status there a more definite character, namely that of Protectorate. This was also the attitude of the India Office, but the Foreign Office was against any change in the status quo since it would be prejudicial to the negotiations. The release of the Bahreinese brought relief to the Foreign Office as they were already contemplating vigorous action for Nicolson declared British patience had its limits.²

These questions were taken very seriously by the Committee of Imperial Defence on 4 May. General W. Nicholson, the Chief of the Imperial General Staff, argued that the Ottoman Army was "very large" and was rapidly improving.

¹India Office to Foreign Office, 29.3.11. Minutes, 4.4. FO/371/1233/12463. L. Smith (Board of Trade) to Mallet, 7.4.11. ibid. /12979.Minutes.

²Lowther to Grey, 25.3.11. tel. no. 66. conf. Minute by Nicolson. Grey to Lowther, 27.3.11. tel. no. 74. Same to same, 7.4.11. tel. no. 91. Lowther to Grey, 11.4.11. no. 241. conf. Minutes, 19.4. Nicolson to Lowther, 16.4.11. Pte. LP.

Thus any British naval or military operation could be only "temporary", since it could not be imagined that British ships or troops could be kept there permanently. The Porte could meanwhile retaliate by creating trouble in Egypt. Kitchener said that if Britain allowed the Porte to take over Koweit it would have a "serious" effect on India. But he thought that all really depended on the campaign in the Yemen. Grey took the most warlike line when he argued that the precarious situation of the Ottomans in the Yemen could be exploited to exercise pressure on the Porte by stopping their reinforcements. He recognised that this was an act of war, "but war must be faced if necessary".¹ Nevertheless the Foreign Office wished, if possible, to keep the status quo in the Gulf, which they might achieve if the moderates obtained the upper hand at Constantinople. Lowther who also favoured a moderate line warned that the 4% Customs increase could not be refused for much longer without causing a breach with the Porte.²

Thus by mid 1911, relations between Britain and the Ottoman Empire could be described as hostile. As Lowther said the sympathy shown by Britain at the beginning of the new regime did not count any more since, as the Ottoman had said, "it did not come out of British pockets". The British refusal to concede the 4%, the temettu and the loan made the British Government "the principal offenders" and "obstructionists" to the regeneration of Ottoman finance and consequently the enemies of the new regime.³

Hardinge in India claimed that he was not at all worried about any danger from the Indian Moslems in the event of war between England and the Ottoman Empire. He regarded the present Pan-Islamic policy of the Porte as a "fallacy", but warned that if not checked it might turn out to be "a dangerous political factor". He suggested they first declare British protection over

¹Extracts from the Minutes of the 110th Meeting of the CID, held on 4.5.11. FO/371/1245/18946. (= CAB/38/18).

²Nicolson to Lowther, 2.5.11. Pte. LP. Lowther to Nicolson, 10.5.11. Pte. ibid. Lowther to Grey, 12.5.11. no. 328.

³Lowther to Nicolson, 24.5.11. Pte. LP.

Bahrein, then send a ship to Basra, seize Ottoman ships and remove the Ottoman posts in the Gulf. Later after the end of the Bahrein crisis, he suggested they spread the rumour that Britain was sending one or two warships to Hodeida to prevent reinforcements reaching the Yemen. This would be enough to deter the Porte since the presence of a British warship would bring about a general rising of the tribes. Nicolson was inclined to accept the attitude of the Indian Government in the matter of Koweit. Hardinge still wished that the Ottomans would "get a knock. It would do them a world of good", but he admitted that this was not the opportune time.¹

The Persian Gulf remained, therefore, the main problem for the British Government in formulating its policy towards the Porte. The Standing-Sub-Committee of the CID which appointed under Morley's chairmanship by the Prime Minister on 8 May, finally decided on 14 July on Britain's policy: Basra was preferable as terminus since it would avoid many awkward questions; Britain was ready to admit that Koweit was under Ottoman suzerainty and the Sheikh an Ottoman Kaimakam, but would expect the Porte to recognise her arrangements with the Sheikh in 1899 and 1907. The most southern limit of Ottoman jurisdiction acceptable was to be Ojair in El Katif. A few days later, on 26 July, it was decided, at an interdepartmental level, that the British Government should ask for 20% share of the Baghdad-Gulf line for political reasons, with the other Entente Powers having an equal share, creating a majority of 60% for the Entente. As the Ottomans offered only 40% for the Entente and excluded Russia, the Foreign Office could see the negotiations as long and difficult. But they would maintain a "very firm" attitude on these questions, as linking them with the consent to the increase of the Customs dues to 15% and the removal of the restrictions on the borrowing

¹Viceroy to Secretary of India, 8.4.11. GP, 98. Hardinge to Nicolson, 16.5.11. Pte. NP, 348. Nicolson to Hardinge, 19.5.11. Pte., *ibid.*, and Grey's speech in the III Meeting of the CID, 26.5.11. CAB/38/18. Hardinge to Nicolson, 9.6.11. Pte. NP, 348.

powers of Egypt. The proposals were submitted to the Porte on 29 July, and seen as a concession of Nicolson.¹

The struggle for British interests was now mostly restricted to the Persian Gulf and a lesser extent to the Gulf-Baghdad line. The Foreign Office was no longer interested in the Rivers navigation or in Willcocks' irrigation. When Willcocks resigned from his position as an adviser in the Ottoman Ministry for Public Works, because he was too much interfered the Foreign Office was happy that he had been employed by the Porte without taking any official advice.²

¹ Persian Gulf. Secret, Report of the Standing Sub-Committee of the CID, 14.7.11. FO/371/1234/29868. Minute by A. Parker, BD.X.ii. p.45. (Ed. Note) Memo. communicated to Tewfik, 29.7.11. conf. BD. ibid. no. 34. Nicolson to Hardinge, 27.7.11. Pte. NP. 349. Nicolson to Buchanan, 1.8.11. Pte. ibid.

² Marling to Grey, 22.7.11. no. 514. Minute by Norman, 28.7. W. Willcocks, Sixty Years in the East, (London, 1935), p. 249.

CHAPTER 4

ON THE EVE OF THE CATASTROPHE: BRITAIN, THE TRIPOLI WAR AND THE
FORMATION OF THE BALKAN LEAGUE (SEPTEMBER 1911 - OCTOBER 1912) *

a. The Tripoli Crisis

The danger to Ottoman rule in the Vilayet of Tripoli as a result of economic penetration by Italy and her complaints of ill-treatment to her citizens became rather acute after the Moroccan question had been settled in France's favour. Italy maintained that this now implied that Tripoli should be under her rule. Crowe was the first to argue that this Italian line was a "dangerous" policy and a little later Grey said that "the break up of Morocco does not imply the break up of Turkey". In the Foreign Office it was, however, realized that "if the Powers of the Triple Entente wish to secure the goodwill of Italy they must acquiesce in her designs on Tripoli. If they do this they must presumably pro tanto alienate the sympathy of Turkey and throw her more and more into the arms of Germany."¹

Britain had decided upon her attitude in the event of a war between Italy and the Ottoman Empire a few days before the beginning of hostilities. Grey's idea was to refer the Porte to Italy's allies, Germany and Austria, should it appeal to England to intervene in Rome in its favour. "It is most important", Grey maintained, "that neither we nor France should side against Italy now". He accepted the Italian version of the situation in Tripoli, and was even prepared to tell the Porte that "any action Italy took to defend her interests had been brought by the Turks upon themselves".² The British Government was

¹ Rodd to Grey, 31.7.11, no. 117, conf. minute by Crowe, 9.8. BD. IX.1. no. 222. Same to same, 4.9.11, no. 138, conf. minutes, 11.9 (also minute by Norman, FO/371/1251) ibid., no. 224.

² Grey to Nicolson, 19.9.11. Pte BD., ibid., no. 231. Lowther to Grey, 25.9.11, tel. no. 211. BD., ibid. no. 237.

* For a background see: W.C. Askew, Europe and Italy's Acquisition of Libya 1911-1912 (Durham, N. Carolina, 1942). E.C. Helmreich, The Diplomacy of the Balkan Wars (Cambridge Mass, 1938). E.C. Thaden, Russia and the Balkan League of 1912 (Pennsylvania, 1965).

not in the least worried about the fate of the Maltese British residents in Tripoli, since she relied upon the Italians.¹

Although British policy should be one of "expectancy and neutrality", Britain, Grey maintained, "Must not throw Italy into the arms of Germany and Austria". The similar danger that the Porte might be thrown into the Germans' arms, aroused little apprehension. Nicolson was reluctant to promise Italy "moral support", but,

I do think it might be well if we could let them (the Italians) know that at the present moment they have our sympathy. I would prefer to see them in Tripoli rather than the Turks;² they would be more comfortable neighbours.

Yet, even though they were aware that hostilities would lead to further trouble in Albania and "elsewhere", the British declined to give any moderate advice to the Italian Government.³

Lowther also refused help to the Porte, though he admitted that it was not similar to the case of Bosnia, which had been regarded as "half gone". When Hakki's Secretary appealed for help on the ground that the new regime had always been "well disposed" to Britain, Lowther replied sarcastically that the British Government had failed to see any "practical demonstration" of it, which Hakki could hardly refute by example.⁴

Nevertheless, Grey still hoped that Italy would not annexe Tripoli since this might be an "extreme step" on her part, for it would cause "great embarrassment" to Powers, like England, who had numerous Moslem subjects. The Porte itself did not refrain from using the Pan-Islamic bogey. It was first demonstrated by Osman Nizami

¹Perry Burry and Comp. to Grey, 25.9.11. Minute by Grey, 25.9. FO/371/1251/37566. Dickson to Lowther, 25.9.11. Minute by Maxwell, 26.9., ibid./37624.

²Grey to Nicolson, 23.9.11. Pte. NP, 350. Nicolson to Grey, 26.9.11. Pte. ibid., Minutes by Grey and Nicolson, 29.9. FO/371/1251/38072.

³Nicolson to Goschen, 26.9.11. Pte. NP, op.cit.

⁴Lowther to Nicolson, 20.9.11. Pte., op.cit., same to same, 27.9.11. Pte.LP.

the Ottoman Ambassador in Berlin, and a CUP adherent, who also accused Britain of always lecturing instead of helping his country,¹ Tewfik also spoke to Nicolson on the possibility of "Moslem fanaticism" having "serious consequences" besides disturbances in Albania and elsewhere in the Balkans.

The British declaration of neutrality raised the question of the British naval officers in Ottoman service. The British Government decided that provided they did not take part in combatant acts, no objection would be made to their remaining in the Ottoman service.² Britain's claim to strict neutrality arose from the desire to see her position in the Ottoman Navy remain intact. In reality Britain did her best to avoid any possible friction with Italy. Mallet and Nicolson deplored the critical line of the majority of the British press on the Italian action. They were anxious lest England should lose Italy's friendship which had been firm since Italian unity.³ Nicolson preferred to express his anti-Ottoman feelings to Cartwright rather than to Lowther:

It seems to me exceedingly foolish that we should displease a country [Italy] with whom we have always been on most friendly terms and whose friendship to us is of very great value, in order to keep well with Turkey, who has been a source of great annoyance to us and whose Government is one of the worst that can well be imagined... If, as I imagine, the second Turkish appeal for European intervention does not succeed, the Turks will then set to work to cause us all as much trouble as they possibly can.⁴

¹Grey to Rodd, 29.9.11, tel. no. 178. BD., op.cit., no. 250. Goschen to Nicolson, 28.9.11. Pte. NP, 351.

²Minute by Nicolson, 28.9.11. FO/371/1251/38167. Grey to Lowther, 3.10.11. tel. no. 357.

³Rodd to Grey, 30.9.11., tel. no. 76. Minutes, 2.10. BD. IX.1. no. 256. Nicolson to Cartwright, 2.10.11. Pte. BD., ibid., no. 267.

⁴Nicolson to Cartwright, 2.10.11. Pte. BD. ibid., no. 267. Nicolson to Lowther, 2.10.11. Pte. LP.

In the Foreign Office Mallet rejected what he called "the bugbear of Moslem resentment against us". He did not hesitate to show his sharp antipathy for the Ottomans: "I consider that Italy is doing us a service in her attack on the Turkish Empire". Nicolson stated that with previous attacks on the Ottoman Empire there was no Moslem resentment in areas under British rule. Still, somewhat frightened by the danger of Pan-Islam, he thought the CUP might try to play it up. Both could find reassurance in Kitchener's assessment of the "complete tranquillity" of Egypt where, he claimed, only "some sections were distinctly excited" by the Tripoli war.¹

The most immediate effect of the Italian aggression on Ottoman politics was the resignation of Hakki and the appointment of Said Pasha. Said was not, according to Lowther, the man to cope with the situation, but he could see no prospect of the CUP's overthrow. Consequently he avoided any contact with Kiamil, the chief opponent of the Young Turks, because he was not yet strong enough. He accused the CUP and Hakki of encouraging the Italians in their Tripoli action, for were the Young Turks not "men of the type that make anarchists"?²

It was, however, realized in the Foreign Office that the coming showdown between the extreme wing of the CUP and the moderates would decide the fate of the Ottoman Empire in both the Tripoli question and the Balkans. It was hoped that "the more reasonable Turks", rather than the "hotheads" of the CUP, would be ready to recognise the fait accompli of the Italian occupation. Nicolson admitted that the analogy with Bosnia did not apply since Austria had administered it, with the Porte's consent, for 30 years and then had compensated the Ottomans

¹Kitchener to Grey, 2.10.11, tel. no. 23, minutes 3.10. FO/371/1252. same to same, 22.10.11. Pte. GP. 47. Grey to Kitchener, 3.11.11. Pte. ibid. Kitchener to Grey, 5.11.11., Pte. Ibid.

²Lowther to Grey, 3.10.11, no. 674, Same to same, 6.10.11., no. 686. Lowther to Nicolson, 4.10.11. Pte. LP. But A. Ryan, the Acting First Dragoman, had a conversation with Kiamil, Lowther to Grey, 4.10.11. tel. no. 236 (partly in BD. op.cit., p. 301). Lowther to Nicolson, 11.10.11. Pte.

for the annexation. But he did not go as far as Hardinge:

I do not like this last move of Italy at all [the Viceroy wrote to Nicolson]. Were we squared by Italy? because I do not otherwise understand how Italy could dare to move in the Mediterranean as her communications are entirely at the mercy of our fleet. I never heard of a worse case of brigandage than the seizure of Tripoli by Italy. When I come to think of it, we have far worse cause for complaint against Turkey in Baghdad and Mesopotamia than ever the Italians had in Tripoli.¹

Nicolson felt that Said, the new Grand Vizier, was not being realistic in his proposals for peace negotiations. The Porte's suggestion that the Italians evacuate Tripoli and for it to become an autonomous province with the Khedive as governor general, was regarded in the Foreign Office as "the most childishly naive one which it is possible to conceive". Both Grey and Nicolson thought that Said hoped that he could tempt England by a "bait" to bring Tripoli, like Egypt, under British occupation. Therefore Nicolson found it useless to receive Halajian, the representative of the CUP and a former Minister, in an interview.²

Furthermore, the Foreign Office made it clear, as early as 16 October, that the Porte must accept the fact that Tripoli was practically lost. The "obscure" situation at Constantinople served as another excuse for British rejection of Ottoman pleas for intervention in Rome.³ This was a good pretext, indeed, since Lowther reported that the internal situation was dangerous as a result of the policy of the extreme party which looked for a solution in a general conflagration. Nicolson was persuaded by Lowther that in a crisis like this it was the extreme party which always gained the upper hand, but could not believe that the "Turks" had any aggressive designs in Bulgaria or Greece. The reverse possibility that

¹Nicolson to Bertie, 5.10.11. Pte. NP. 351. Nicolson to Hardinge, 12.10.11. Pte., ibid., Hardinge to Nicolson, 15.10.11. Pte. ibid.

²Note communicated by Tewfik, 8.10.11. Minute by Grey. FO/371/1253/40235 Nicolson to Lowther, 16.10.11. Pte. LP.

³Minutes by Nicolson and Grey, 16.10.11. ED. op.cit., no. 287. Lowther to Grey, 14.10.11. no. 718. Nicolson to Cartwright, 16.10.11. Pte. NP., 351. Lowther to Nicolson, 18.10.11. LP.

Bulgaria might be tempted to attack the Ottoman Empire was dismissed at the Foreign Office because Europe would resist such an action and the Porte was quite capable of inflicting a "serious lesson" on its enemies in Europe, though, admittedly, not in Tripoli. As to Tripoli itself the British Government was not worried as to the advantage the Triple Alliance might gain by Italy's occupation of Tobruk: "So long as we maintain our naval supremacy, the possession of Tripoli must weaken Italy".¹

The British Government naturally opposed the suggestion, raised by the Italian Ambassador in Paris, that the Porte should be granted the 4% Customs dues increase as part of the future settlement between Italy and the Porte. Their reasoning was obvious: "We have our own ends to gain by any such concession". The British Government was, however, keen that the Tripoli War should be terminated soon though, of course, not at her expense, lest the unrest be extended to other Ottoman provinces, primarily the Balkans.

Though the Foreign Office was perhaps anxious to see a stable government at Constantinople at any time, particularly one of trouble, there was still a strong apprehension lest the Ottoman Empire became too strong by military success in Tripoli:

It would be most unfortunate, from every point of view, if the Turks were enabled to gain any substantial successes, as then they would become perfectly impossible, and we should find them exceedingly difficult to deal with in case which are pending between us, and also probably a great impression would be made on the Mussulmans in Egypt and possibly in India.²

But the Foreign Office's reaction to the possibility of an Italian attack on the Dardanelles was feeble. Nicolson said that such an act would be foolish indeed, but Grey said that no power including of course Britain, would use force against Italy. The Porte was therefore told

¹Granville to Grey, 20.10.11. no. 328. Minute by Mallet, 24.10.FO/371/1254.

²Cartwright to Grey, 28.10.11. tel. no. 117. very conf. minute by Vansittart, 30.10. FO/371/1255. Nicolson to Cartwright, 30.10.11. Pte. NP., 351.

that Britain was "unaware" of Italian intentions, and as a neutral Power she could not intervene.¹ This did not mean that the British Government was very happy when the Italians officially annexed Tripoli and Cyrenaica on 5 November, an act which they considered "premature". But Nicolson was more concerned about the "most unfortunate" hostile attitude of the British press: "I am afraid that this will affect our friendly relations with Italy, which it is most desirable to promote and maintain". He soon realized that the extension of the area of hostilities might create international complications and the Balkan States to exploit the opportunity. But, concerned as they were, the basic attitude of the British Government as passive "spectators" could not be affected.² Although Lowther, while still critical of the CUP's methods, was sympathetic to the Ottoman cause in the Tripoli War. Were he in the Ottoman's place he would have acted similarly.³

The actual British attitude came nearer to "strict neutrality" when Grey expressed his criticism of Italy's policy on 14 November: "The Italians have been very foolish in putting out their foot so far in this Tripoli business; they had a fair case for squeezing guarantees for economic interests in Tripoli and the reversion of Tripoli out of the Turks". Nicolson also had doubts as to the astuteness of the Italians, since he could not see how Italy could inflict a severe blow on the Ottomans: "I am afraid Italy will weary of the war before Turkey, and that the latter will be able to continue passive resistance indefinitely".⁴ But Nicolson believed that British public opinion was "unjust" in her

¹Lowther to Grey, 7.11.11, tel. no. 305. Minutes, 8.11. FO/371/1256. Grey to Lowther, 3.11.11. no. 301.

²Rodd to Grey, 5.11.11, tel. no. 140. Nicolson to O'Beirne, 8.11.11, Pte. NP. 351. Nicolson to Rodd, 9.11.11. Pte. ibid.

³Lowther to Nicolson, 8.11.11. Pte. LP. Lowther to Grey, 7.11.11. no. 796. FO/371/1257.

⁴Grey to Rodd, 14.11.11. Pte. BD.IX. i. no. 308. Nicolson to Lowther, 14.11.11. Pte. LP.

attitude towards Italy with regard to "the so-called atrocities", while not admitting the "dreadful acts" committed by the Arabs.¹

Meanwhile, the possibility of an Italian attack on the Dardanelles occupied the attention of the Foreign Office more than ever before. It was admitted that in the event of such attack the Porte was fully entitled to defend itself according to the rule salus reipublicae suprema lex est. Grey, however, was not impressed by this or by another argument that there was no article in the Treaty of London (1871), which could prevent the Porte from taking any measures for her self-defence: "Treaty or no Treaty I think our interest in the grain trade and commercial shipping connected with the Black Sea is such that we could not stand the Black Sea trade being stopped by this wretched war".² Shevket, however, made it clear to Lowther that the Ottomans would fight to the last in the event of an Italian attack on the Dardanelles. Lowther felt that the Porte would "rejoice" if an Italian blockade would take place as they imagined that the Powers would then have to do something.³

Though the Foreign Office shared Russian apprehensions on the grain trade they admitted that no representations should be made to the Porte in order not to suffer any possible odium and not to give to the Porte any pretext to call for intervention.⁴

Hardinge had more reason than the Foreign Office to be disturbed by the slightness of the chance of achieving peace in the Tripoli War. On 30 November he reported of the "considerable effervescence" among Moslems which could not be ignored or checked. Fortunately, argued Hardinge, the Moslems were too preoccupied by their hostility to the

¹ Nicolson to Buchanan, 21.11.11. Pte. NP. 352. Rodd to Grey, 13.11.11. no. 241. conf. minutes by Vansittart and Mallet, 20.11.

² Benckendorff to Grey, 26.11.11. Minutes, 28.11. BD. op.cit., no. 322.

³ Lowther to Nicolson, 22.11.11. Pte. LP. Lowther to Grey, 24.11.11. no. 858. FO/371/1258. Cartwright to Grey, 28.11.11. tel. no. 126. Minute by Norman.

⁴ Grey to Buchanan, 30.11.11. no. 312. BD. op.cit., no. 332.

Hindus to be able to involve themselves fully in the "Turkish question".¹ Lowther also believed in the Pan-Islamic bogey which prevented the Porte from abandoning the Tripoli vilayet, since this would produce, as he was told by the Porte, "a frightful row" in the Yemen, Assyr and "other Arab provinces". The Pan-Islamic question was even raised in the House of Commons on 27 November when Mark Sykes denied its importance, but also stressed that a strong Ottoman Empire was important to British commerce and strategy at present as it was in Disraeli's days.²

In the Foreign Office the opinion on the Ottoman Empire was even worse than Aehrenthal's. Aehrenthal's news from Macedonia was "very bad". He still felt that: "To weaken Turkey under present circumstances would be to destroy the equilibrium in the Balkans and lead to a crash." While the Austrian statesman was "obsessed" with the problem how to achieve peace without reducing the Porte from its position as a great Power, in the Foreign Office even junior clerks could argue: "Turkey can hardly be said to have counted as a Great Power since the seventeenth century". But this low opinion was accompanied by fear lest "Italy's aggression will tend to unify Moslem feeling". Nevertheless, it was felt that if the Balkans remained quiet in the spring the Porte would lose only a small amount of property.³

The beginning of 1912 did not see any progress towards a settlement in Tripoli. The prevailing opinion was that no Ottoman Cabinet could agree to the loss of Tripoli before the elections were over. But as the date for this election was not yet known the chances for peace were as remote as ever. The Foreign Office feared that the continuation might

¹Hardinge to Nicolson, 30.11.11. Pte. NP, 352.

²Lowther to Nicolson, 29.11.11. Pte, LP. Hansard, vol. XXXII. cols. 102-5. Sykes also complained about the public's entire ignorance as to the nature of British policy towards the Porte.

³Cartwright to Grey, 7.12.11. tel. no. 132. BD. ibid. no. 343. conf. minute by Vansittart. 8.12. FO/371/1259. Bridge, op.cit. pp. 300 ff.

bring complications in the Balkans.¹ Britain could not agree to put strong pressure on the Porte, as Italy and Russia had desired, in favour of the Italian annexation of Tripoli. Such pressure would be futile as the Ottomans had decided that the war did not cost them very much and had hardly weakened them in dealing with possible trouble in the Balkans.² From Tripoli itself, Fitzmaurice, now the Acting Consul-General, was hardly optimistic of the Ottomans' chance of winning this war: "They seem to be paying the penalty of having gone too fast and bitten off more than they could chew and digest - a mistake common to them and the Persian revolutionaries."³ But the Ottoman claim that the Tripoli War was a greater strain on Italy than on themselves was accepted without reservation by the Foreign Office.⁴

The main aims of British policy was to avoid war in the Balkans and to achieve peace in the Tripoli war. But this could be obtained only through a concerted policy of all the Powers and not, as desired by Russia, by the Entente alone. The only alternative was the dim hope that Austria and Russia could reach a settlement without the other Powers. Such an agreement was doubtless far ahead, while the difficulties according to the Foreign Office remained as before: growing intransigence on the Ottoman part in the Tripoli question, and the fact that the Porte could not produce the right men to govern Macedonia in accordance with European ideas.⁵

Britain became now more sensitive than before of her image as a

¹Same to same, 3.1.12. tel. no. 1. Minute by Vansittart, 4.1. FO/371/1524. Rodd to Grey, 3.1.12. tel. no. 1. Minutes BD. op.cit., no. 354.

²Lowther to Grey, 8.1.12. no. 21. Minute by Vansittart, 16.1. Rodd to Grey, 17.1.12. no. 10. conf. minute, 20.1. Babington-Smith to Nicolson, 24.1.12. Pte. NP. 353. Lowther to Nicolson, 17.1.12. Pte. LP.

³Fitzmaurice to Tyrrell, 6.1.12. Pte. GP, 80.

⁴Lowther to Grey, 22.1.12. no. 64.

⁵Nicolson to Cartwright, 5.2.12. Pte. NP, 353.

neutral Power mainly in the Ottomans' eyes. This was a result of the revival of the Pan-Islamic fears of the Government of India. Hardinge hoped that in future mediation between Italy and the Porte, Britain would not occupy a back seat:

It is most important for us to be able to show to the Muhammadans of India that we have been doing what we can to put an end to the war with Italy which they resent very much and regard as the beginning of the end of Islam in Europe. They think also that we might have stopped it.¹

Nicolson was aware of the "very strong feeling" which prevailed amongst the Indian Moslems that Britain had been unfair to the Porte and expected her to endeavour to prevent the annexation of Tripoli to Italy. Any pressure, therefore, on the Porte was out of the question in these circumstances.²

Meanwhile the Tripoli war extended beyond the African borders. The most dangerous feature of it was the bombardment of the Dardanelles on 18 April. The British Government deplored this action not only at the diplomatic level but also in Parliament on 2 May, when Lord Morley admitted that the Ottomans were fully entitled to defend themselves. More significant was his public admittance of the importance of Pan-Islam: "It would be a great mistake if we left out of sight with regard to Turkey the enormous Mahomedan interests with which we are concerned". But British concern as to the Italian attack and the closure of the Straits really resulted from anxiety over trade: "...we cannot remain a party to their attempts to hoodwink Turkey as to their intentions at the expense of the whole grain trade".³ Grey also claimed that Britain's attitude was "scrupulously

¹Nicolson to Lowther, 4.3.12. Pte. LP. Lowther to Nicolson, 6.3.12. Pte. ibid., Hardinge to Nicolson, 12.3.12. Pte. NP, 354.

²Nicolson to Buchanan, 12.3.12. Pte. Bertie to Grey, 13.3.12. no. 129. Minute by Norman, 15.3. FO/371/1524. Lowther to Grey, 20.3.12. no. 233. Minute by Vansittart, 25.3. Grey to Rodd, 29.3.12. no. 67.

³Lowther to Grey, 18.4.12. tel. no. 98. Minute by Mallet, 19.4. FO371/1531. Buchanan to Grey, 20.4.12. tel. no. 160. Lowther to Grey, 22.4.12. tel. no. 116, minute by Mallet, 22.4. Grey to Rodd, 19.4.12. no. 81. BD.IX. i. no. 395. Hansard. House of Lords, vol. XI. cols. 922-4.

fair" to the Porte, as they were "absolutely" alone in bringing to the notice of the Italian Government the losses incurred to their shipping.¹ Britain's neutrality, however, was not appreciated at the Porte, where Shevket, the Minister of War, blamed her for Italy's aggression. His bitterness was dismissed in the Foreign Office as "grumblings" resulting from Marschall's "persuasiveness".²

The Foreign Office had to face a new problem when early in May the balance of power in the Mediterranean was threatened as a result of the Italian occupation of Rhodes. By late May, Italy had occupied all the twelve Dodecanese islands. The Admiralty was asked how far this would affect Britain in the event of war with the Triple Alliance. The Admiralty admitted that Italian naval bases in the Aegean Sea and the eastern Mediterranean would constitute a threat to Egypt and also to the Levant and Black Sea trade.³

The Foreign Office feared even more that the Admiralty might convince the Cabinet as to the necessity of evacuating the British Fleet from the Mediterranean. Nicolson and Grey agreed with Crowe that the effect of such an evacuation would be crucial for British position both at Constantinople and at Rome. Crowe claimed that British influence at Constantinople had "always rested mainly on her position as the mistress of the Mediterranean Sea, and it would be contrary both to reason and to experience to expect that this position would remain unaffected by a permanent withdrawal of the British fleet". Salonica had been saved from Austrian occupation during the Bosnian crisis by the "mere presence" of the British fleet and neither Egypt nor the Sudan could be held against

¹Grey to Kitchener, 16.5.12. Pte. GP, 48.

²Lowther to Grey, 1.5.12. no. 370. BD. op.cit., no. 403. Minute by Mallet, 6.5. FO/371/1537. BD, op.cit. no. 403.

³Lowther to Grey, 18.5.12. no. 425. Minute by Mallet, 23.5. Admiralty to Foreign Office, 31.5.12. Minutes by Mallet and Grey, 3.6. FO/371/1535/23344. Admiralty to Foreign Office, 29.6.12. conf. Encl. Italian Occupation of Aegean Island and its Effect on Naval Policy. Secret. 20.6.12. BD.IX. i. no. 430. Albertini, op.cit., I, pp. 360 ff.

the Ottomans or "any great European Power" without British command of the Mediterranean. The Foreign Office ultimately won the battle with the Admiralty since the CID decided to maintain the one-power standard in the Mediterranean, which meant an equal or superior British fleet to that of Austria.¹

Whilst clouds were gathering around the Balkans, the Tripoli war was far from a solution. Though ^{the} British Government repeatedly claimed that it would never enforce unacceptable conditions on the Porte because of its Moslem subjects in India, it also opposed a German advice that the Tobacco Regie should advance a loan to the Porte. The reason given by Mallet to this refusal was that such "mischievous advice" might be an obstacle to peace with Italy. Cassel's refusal to lend money to the Porte was also approved for the same reason.²

b. The Coming of the Balkan Wars.

The new regime now saw itself endangered by another Power. On 12 October Tcharykov, the Russian Ambassador, presented to Said Pasha a draft concerning an arrangement which would allow Russia free passage through the Straits in return for a guarantee of Ottoman territory of Constantinople and its environments, a consent for 4% of Customs dues increase, the maintenance of the status quo in the Balkans and the so-called British naval support and French financial aid. The Foreign Office was unenthusiastic about the suggestion for guaranteeing Ottoman territory, and angry for not being consulted over "naval support". The chief objection was the responsibility for British policy such naval

¹ Memo on the Effect of a British Evacuation of the Mediterranean on Questions of Foreign Policy, 8.5.12. BD.X.ii. no. 386. Grey to Kitchener, 8.5.12. Pte., ibid., no. 387. Kitchener to Grey, 19.5.12, Pte., ibid., no. 390. Nicolson to Bertie, 23.5.12. Pte. NP, 356. Nicolson to Hardinge, 18.7.12. Pte., ibid., 357.

² Bertie to Nicolson, 16.5.12. Pte & Conf. BP. 180. Bertie to Grey, 18.6.12, tel. no. 81, conf. Minute, 19.6. FO/371/1495. Rodd to Grey, 16.6.12. no. 161. Minute by Nicolson, 21.6. BD.IX. i. no. 413. Nicolson to Lowther, 24.6.12. Pte. LP. Grey to Dering, 20.9.12. no. 227. conf.

support might carry with it. Lowther's dislike for Tcharykov's proposal was based on the strong suspicion of Russia which still characterized Ottoman policy. He felt that the whole matter would probably end with "violently" throwing the Ottomans into Germany's arms.¹ Nicolson also objected to Tcharykov's proposals, not only because this might involve the British Government in guaranteeing part of the Ottoman Empire, but also because he thought that such a proposal might endanger the shaky position of Said's Cabinet. Tcharykov was besides "a man of great vanity and, to my mind, very unreliable".²

In the meantime Tcharykov's proposals were met with Ottoman objections. In London it was observed that the Russian Ambassador, "a great busybody and very anxious to make a name for himself", did not really have his government's support. The Porte asked the British Government their view on the proposals. Fortunately for the Porte England was little interested in changing the status quo in the Straits or accepting new responsibilities in the Balkans. The British Government's attitude was that as far as the defence of the Straits was concerned this was a matter between the Ottomans and the Russians alone, but the passage of the Straits was a matter which had to be considered in the light of international treaties. Britain, however, would not oppose the question being discussed as they had promised Izvolsky in October 1908. Lowther reported that there was a "strong" feeling amongst the Ottomans that Britain would never allow such a "radical" change, which might bring with it another shift in favour of the Triple Alliance. But the Russian Government soon disavowed Tcharykov's proposals, and the whole matter was at an end on 13 December. The British gave a sigh of relief: "Such a proposal if seriously maintained

¹Grey to O'Beirne, 23.10.11. tel. no. 638. BD. op.cit., no. 291.
Lowther to Nicolson, 25.10.11. Pte. LP. Nicolson to Lowther,
30.10.11. Pte., ibid.

²Nicolson to O'Beirne, 25.10.11. Pte. NP, 351.

would have introduced a fresh and very dangerous element into a situation which is already sufficiently delicate and complicated". Lowther thought that Britain's position would suffer, since the Ottomans believed the proposals had been made with British consent.¹

Meanwhile, the deadlock as to the possibility of achieving peace in the Tripoli War, raised greater apprehensions in the Foreign Office in view of the danger of a Balkan conflagration. But in Crete alone, where Germany and Austria were not involved, Britain and France, with Greek acquiescence, intervened directly and prevented the Cretan deputies from joining the Greek Assembly in Athens. Grey was very careful to avoid any British involvement in the Balkans proper. He objected to any Entente pressure on the Porte in connection with the Tripoli War, because the Porte might ask the Powers to guarantee with Ottoman provinces in the Balkans. The British Government was ready to take part only in a collective action of the five Powers. In view of the possibility of the continuation of the recent violent Ottoman methods in Macedonia the Foreign Office felt it would be "a serious responsibility and an embarrassing one" to be involved in any guarantee of Ottoman integrity.²

Not much attention was given at the Foreign Office to the first reports from Sofia on the fact that the "seed of a future entente has been sown" between Sofia and Belgrade. Britain's basic attitude remained as before: the Balkans were the first concern of Russia and Austria, while England should be careful not to initiate any policy which might commit her "more deeply than it is necessary or wise". By the end of the year the conclusion in the Foreign Office was that the Balkan Federation

¹Lowther to Grey, 2.12.11. no. 888. conf. minutes, 18.12. BD.IX. no. 336. Nicolson to Lowther, 11.12.11. Pte. LP. Buchanan to Grey, 11.12.11. no. 336. Minutes.BD., op.cit. no. 345. Lowther to Grey, 13.12.11. tel. no. 345. Same to same, 14.12.11., tel. no. 350. BD. op.cit., no. 348. Nicolson to Hardinge, 20.12.11. Pte. NP. 352. Lowther to Nicolson, 19.12.11. Pte. LP. E.C. Thaden, op.cit., ch. 2.

²Nicolson to Hardinge, 20.12.11. Pte. NP, 352. Buchanan to Grey, 26.12.11. tel. no. 350. Minutes, BD. op.cit., no. 350. Grey to Buchanan, 29.12.11. tel. no. 866, ibid., no. 351. Same to same, 29.12.11, tel. no. 867. Conf. FO/371/1260.

was still "very far distant" as the Balkan States distrusted both the Porte and each other. The old idea of establishing an Ottoman-Balkan league was still the desired goal of the Foreign Office.¹

The Foreign Office was led to believe that the Balkan States would not venture any hostile act as the Tripoli War did not impair the "very strong" Ottoman military strength in the Balkans.² Izvolsky's warning that serious trouble might very shortly take place was dismissed as alarming. The Foreign Office preferred to be re-assured by Bax-Ironside, the Minister at Sofia, that Bulgaria "certainly will not belt the cat" unless Austria took the lead.³ Lowther, however, dissuaded the Foreign Office from putting any pressure on the Porte, which had been bullied too much from other quarters. In mid-February he was sure that trouble in Albania in the spring would be "very remote". The bribery offered by the Porte to the Albanian chiefs persuaded him to believe in a settlement, even though it reminded him so much of the Hamidian system. He shared with Nicolson the belief that there was no danger of any Balkan alliance against the Porte, as the Balkan States would "never" agree as to how Macedonia should be divided amongst themselves.⁴ Nevertheless, Lowther now was regarded in the Foreign Office as a little too optimistic compared to the pessimistic Cartwright.⁵

When Bax-Ironside informed the Foreign Office that serious negotiations were taking place between Bulgaria and Servia with the intention of dividing up Macedonia in the event of the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire, the Foreign Office was still unmoved. Moreover,

¹Bax-Ironside to Nicolson, 23.10.11. Pte. most conf. BD., ibid., no. 525. Cartwright to Grey, 5.12.11. no. 205. conf. Minute by Grey, 11.12., ibid. no. 528. Lampson to Grey, 12.12.11. no. 129. Minute by Maxwell, 27.12. ibid. no. 530. Bridge, op.cit., p.300 ff.

²Nicolson to Buchanan, 30.1.12. Pte. NP, 353. Bax-Ironside to Nicolson, 31.1.12. Pte., ibid., Lowther to Grey, 22.1.12. no. 64.

³Nicolson to Lowther, 5.2.12. Pte. LP. Grey to Bertie, 7.2.12. no. 51. conf. BDL, op.cit., no. 547. Same to same, 3.2.12, no. 53 ibid., no. 366.

⁴Lowther to Nicolson, 14.2.12. Pte. LP. Nicolson to Lowther, 19.2.12. Pte., ibid.

⁵Cartwright to Nicolson, 15.2.12. Pte. NP, 353. Nicolson to Cartwright, 19.2.12. Pte., ibid.

Lowther had no idea of what was going on between Sofia and Belgrade.¹

Indeed, events in the Balkans were developing faster and more ominously than in Tripoli. Servia and Bulgaria had signed a secret treaty of alliance and friendship on 11, 13 March respectively. The treaty however was drafted in a rather careful way as far as the Porte was concerned. Being backed by Russia it was interpreted in the Foreign Office as an anti-Austrian move, and therefore much regretted since it lessened the chance of Russo-Austrian rapprochement in Balkan affairs.² Two days before the text of this treaty reached London the Foreign Office still believed that an Ottoman-Bulgarian entente was possible, though Britain could not champion the Ottoman cause in seeking such a rapprochement.³

The new treaty, however, did not cause as much anxiety to the Foreign Office as did the growing anti-Ottoman attitude of Russia, exemplified by the controversy on both the Ottoman-Persian and the Caucasus frontiers. Nicolson admitted that the recall of Tcharykov could not be understood without the presumption that Russia had changed her line towards the Porte and the recent Russian diplomatic activity in favour of accepting Italy's demands in Tripoli had also to be seen in this context. Britain was naturally most unwilling to annoy Russia although it was admitted in the Foreign Office that Russia had put British policy into a "mess". Far from thinking of weakening the Entente with Russia, Britain was again caught between her firm friendship with Russia and the bogey of Pan-Islam.⁴ Mallet expressed regret that Tcharykov's

¹ Nicolson to Hardinge, 22.2.12. Pte. NP. 353. Bax-Ironside to Nicolson, 26.2.12. Pte. and most conf. BD., op.cit., no. 555. Nicolson to Buchanan, 27.2.12. Pte. NP, 354. Lowther to Nicolson, 28.2.12. Pte. LP.

² Bax-Ironside to Nicolson, 14.3.12. Pte. and Secret tel. BD. op.cit., no. 558. Same to same, 14.3.12. Pte. and most conf., ibid., no. 559, ibid. App. V. Nicolson to Cartwright, 18.3.12. Pte. ibid., no. 560. Minute by Nicolson, 6.4.12, BD.IX. ii. App.II. Nicolson to Lowther, 11.6.12. Pte. LP.

³ Lowther to Grey, 28.2.12. no. 174. Minutes by Norman and Mallet, 6.3. FO/371/1492. Grey to Bax-Ironside, 12.3.12. no. 7.

⁴ Nicolson to Lowther, 18.3.12. Pte. NP, op.cit. Minute by Norman, 15.3, in: Bertie to Grey, 13.3.12. no. 129, op.cit. Same to same, 20.3.12. tel. no. 49. Minute by Mallet. Nicolson to Buchanan, 26.3.12. Pte. NP, op.cit.

policy had failed as it had much suited British policy, for a rapprochement between the Porte and the Balkan States would have guaranteed peace: "Such a rapprochement would relieve us of any difficulties which might arise with Russia, if she pursued a policy hostile to Turkey".¹ The Foreign Office had begun to realize that Russia might soon take a more active line in the Balkans which could be adverse to the Porte's interests. As to the Balkan States themselves Nicolson was convinced, at the end of March, that they were not inclined to start hostilities. Moreover, the Porte would be able to deal with any rising in Macedonia or Albania.

If there was any question which worried the British Government in connection with the Balkans it was Crete, where the Greek Government pressed Britain to find a solution to the problem. Since that meant pressure upon the Porte, the Foreign Office regarded it as out of the question because of its possible effect on the Indian Moslems, already agitated over Britain's attitude or the Tripoli war.²

Nicolson momentarily deluded himself into believing that the Servo-Bulgarian treaty had possibly been concluded under the inspiration of Tcharykov in order to include the Ottomans later, but the appointment of Swetchine, a notorious Turcophobe as Chargé at the Russian Embassy at Constantinople hardly increased this possibility.³

Meanwhile, affairs in Albania were unfavourable for the Porte. It seemed that Hadji Adil's Mission only intensified the bitterness of the population. This was confirmed both by Peckham, the Vice-Consul at Uskub and Miss Durham. The latter was grieved to see Graves, the Adviser to the Ottoman Ministry of Finance and member of the Mission, "masquerading

¹Lowther to Nicolson, 20.3.12. Pte. BD. *op.cit.*, no. 561. Lowther to Grey, 15.3.12. no. 220, conf. minute by Mallet, 20.3. *ibid.*, no. 383. Townley to Grey, 11.3.12. no. 15, very conf. minute by Mallet, 18.3.

²Nicolson to Rodd, 15.3.12. Pte. NP, *op.cit.*, same to same, 29.3.12. Pte. *ibid.* Nicolson to de Bunsen, 27.3.12. Pte. *ibid.*

³Nicolson to Cartwright, 27.3.12. Pte. NP, 345.

in a fez along with the gang". This kind of partisanship, though admitted by the Foreign Office, was accepted since Miss Durham was regarded in the Foreign Office as "honest and by no means stupid". She had already secured the Foreign Office's confidence since Mallet concluded that the Young Turks were "quite incompetent" to rule Albania.¹

Britain, however, could do but little to stop the anti-Young Turk ferment in the Balkans. Miss Durham continued to bombard the Foreign Office with her devastating anti-CUP reports and resented the "support" given by Europe to the Young Turks. Her assessment of the situation was regarded with more credibility than the rosy picture of the Vice-Consul at Scutary. But when the Vice-Consul at Uskub was asked by the Albanians to support their demands for either a non-party Cabinet under Kiamil or their own autonomy, Lowther ordered the Vice-Consul, with the subsequent approval of the Foreign Office, to avoid giving any encouragement to the "extravagant" aspirations of the Albanians.²

Britain's deep anxiety later in April arose less from estrangement from the Porte, or difficulties on the way to a settlement of the Railway and the Gulf questions, than from conspicuous anti-Ottoman change in Russian policy, most clearly exemplified in growing Russo-Italian friendship. The architect of this policy was Izvolsky, now Ambassador in Paris, and Nicolson could hardly avoid the obvious conclusion that this might affect the Balkans. This he dared intimate initially only to Hardinge:

I do not know if at the back of his [Sazonov's] mind he has any desire that trouble should ensue in the Balkans which might justify Russian intervention on behalf of the Balkan States and thereby gradually lead perhaps to the expulsion of Turkey from those regions. In any case I think he is playing a dangerous

¹ Same to same, 25.3.12, no. 246. Minute by Norman, 2.4. Miss Durham to Spence 28.3.12. Minutes, II.4.FO/371/1491/15090. Miss Durham to Nevins, 28.3.12. *ibid.* /15231/. Graves' version: R. Graves, *op.cit.*, pp. 253 ff.

² Summa to Lamb, 31.3.12. no. 3, in: Lowther to Grey, 10.4.12, no. 300. Minutes, 15.4. Miss Durham to Nevins, 3.4.12. Minutes, 18.4. FO/371/1481/16200. Miss Durham to Spence, 8.4.12, *ibid.*/16526/. Lowther to Grey, 29.4.12. no. 359. Minute by Parker, 11.5.

game... I think, however, that it is absolutely essential that we should at all costs maintain to the full our understanding [in Persia] with Russia. I should view with absolute dismay were it to be in any way seriously impaired and if our relations with Russia were to become cold.

Grey added a further dimension to Nicolson's apprehensions: "If Russia comes out heavily against Turkey it will not suit us, because of the Mohammadans in India".¹ Again, the Foreign Office was very much alive to such a danger through Hardinge who still influenced the shaping of British policy from India: "They [the Moslems] are in a very restless frame of mind and will require very careful watching. I do not anticipate any difficulties, but I shall be glad when the war is over".² Lowther also felt that the change of Russian ambassadors at Constantinople was more than a personal one, for: "I should not be surprised to see a succession of pinpricks with the eventual intention of bringing about the collapse of Turkey".³

With the imminent danger of an Albanian revolt, the position of the Ottoman provinces in Europe became even more precarious. At the beginning of May Graves reassured Lowther that there was a good chance of success for Ottoman reform after Hadji Adil's Mission, but Lowther was soon disillusioned as a result of the recrudescence of the revolt for which he blamed "that fool" Talaat. The Porte asked the Foreign Office to invite Miss Durham to leave Albania since, it claimed, she was a member of the Albanian Revolutionary Committee. The Foreign Office were reluctant to do so lest her friends in England oppose them, and initiate a new anti-CUP campaign. Opinion in the Foreign Office on the Albanians veered between seeing them as "Really very unreasonable" and feeling that "They cannot

¹Nicolson to Hardinge, 18.4.12. Pte. NP. 355. Grey to Nicolson, 22.4.12. Pte., *ibid.*, Nicolson to Lowther, 29.4.12. Pte. LP. also: BD, IX.2. App. II, p. 1008.

²Hardinge to Nicolson, 14.5.12, Pte, NP. 355.

³Lowther to Nicolson, 24.4.12. Pte. LP. Same to same, 1.5.12. Pte., *ibid.*

trust the Turks and with great reason".¹

By May, Nicolson discovered, through the Embassy in St. Petersburg, that the Bulgaro-Servian treaty was of "a more serious and far-reaching character than we originally supposed" and that the division of Macedonia had in fact been decided upon. This was seen by Nicolson as a result of Sazonov's "adventurous" policy. Nevertheless, he instructed the British Charge in St. Petersburg not to disclose his apprehensions to Sazonov as at the present moment it is exceedingly necessary for us to keep on the best possible terms with Russia". As he admitted to Goschen, he could not "enlighten" Lowther on the nature of the recent change in Russian policy towards the Porte. He was further caught by the rumour that Germany was also about to change her policy towards the Porte. But he was confident that no troubles would occur in 1912 unless Italy attempted to extend the war to the mainland, an extremely unlikely occurrence.² Lowther himself was far from being shocked by the Bulgaro-Servian treaty because the Ottomans themselves were so "extraordinarily calm" about any Balkan movement against them. But he concluded that the situation in the Balkans was in fact insoluble since the Bulgarians did not want a good Ottoman government but government by Bulgaria, and the Albanians would always be discontented.³ In June, however, he reported on the change of policy in Albania from repression to benevolence. Mallet welcomed it and hoped that it would be "really" carried out. Lowther realized that the Foreign Office could not dismiss the Albanians as lightly as he could. For, they were "really only a handful of insubordinates who require a lot of

¹Extract from Graves' letter, 9.5.12. in: same to same, 13.5.12. Pte., *ibid.*, Lowther to Grey, 14.5.12, tel. no. 160, Minutes. Same to same, 14.5.12. tel. no. 411, minutes by Norman and Maxwell, 20.5. Lowther to Nicolson, 15.5.12. Pte. LP. Graves, *op.cit.*, p. 277.

²O'Beirne to Nicolson, 16.5.12. Pte. BD.IX,i, no. 569. Nicolson to O'Beirne, 21.5.12. *ibid.*, no. 570. Nicolson to Goschen, 13.5.12. Pte. NP, 355. Same to same, 31.5.12, Pte., *ibid.*, Cartwright to Nicolson, 23.5.12. Pte. *ibid.*, 356.

³Lowther to Nicolson, 8.5.12, Pte. LP. Same to same, 22.5.12. Pte. Nicolson to O'Beirne, 21.5.12, Pte., NP. 355.

money and plums to be bought off with, and who will always want more".¹
The report that the Albanian and Bulgarian rebels had joined forces, alarmed Mallet because of the impact it might have on Egypt and India.²

In London Nicolson twice refused to tell Tewfik the details of the Bulgaro-Servian treaty, and mentioned only the press reports. He reassured the Ambassador that if these reports were true the British Government had nothing to do with these combinations. Lowther still calmed the Foreign Office on the possibility of unrest, only because the Porte lacked information as to the real nature of the treaty. Nicolson agreed that the Ottoman calmness stemmed from this reason:

When he [Assim] does obtain this information, I think his views in regard to it will be very greatly modified. I think the Balkan States would take immediate advantage of any opportunity which they thought favourable to them".³

But the Albanians were first to provide Ghazi Moukhtar's Government with its most acute problem. According to Marling the problem could be solved by giving the Albanians their own schools, permission to use their alphabet, military service only in their own areas, easier taxation and Albanian officials. They would then be content. What he failed to realise was that they, by demanding the dissolution of the Ottoman Parliament and new and fair elections, were in fact asking for the right to influence the political decisions of the Ottoman Empire as a whole.

Whatever concessions the Albanians asked they did not pursue autonomy, until May 1912 when they submitted a programme which amounted to autonomy.⁴ This, however, was already being propagated by both Austria and Russia. Sazonov hoped that autonomous Albania would serve as a "stepping-stone" for the introduction of "serious" reforms in Macedonia. This was "the only

¹Lowther to Grey, 7.6.12. no. 489. Minute, 18.6. Lowther to Nicolson. 19.6.12, Pte. LP.

²Lowther to Grey, 10.6.12, tel. no. 186. Minutes by Mallet and Grey, 11.6.

³Minute by Nicolson, 1.6.12. FO/371/1493/24035. Minute by Nicolson, 12.6.12. ibid. /25850/. Lowther to Nicolson, 19.6.12. Pte. LP. Nicolson to Lowther, 24.6.12. Pte., ibid.

⁴Skendi, *passim*. They demanded: 1) Albania to be made a single Vilayet. 2) instruction to be made in Albanian using Latin alphabet. 3) Albanian functionaries for Albania and the language of the courts to be Albanian. 4) military service in peacetime to be in Albania.

way" to keep Bulgaria and Servia quiet. Britain rejected this policy which gave little chance for Ghazi Moukhtar's Government to prove itself.¹

But the voice of Norman was making itself heard in the Foreign Office: "It is clear that the Macedonians have as good a right to the benefit of reforms as their Albanian neighbours". Mallet was prepared to defend the Porte by maintaining that this might defeat the object of British policy and upset the Porte. But the pressure upon the Foreign Office from their Russian friends was growing. It was again Mallet who defended the Porte more than anyone else in the Foreign Office. He told the Russian Chargé in London that he "personally" was much afraid to give "so much" advice to the Porte just now. Basically the prevailing thought was the one expressed by Grey as late as August: "Justice and good government is rally all that is wanted in Macedonia". Mallet was allowed to carry on with his policy of non-intervention in Ottoman internal affairs as illustrated by his remarks to the Bulgarian Minister: "It was unnecessary to say that I was strongly in sympathy with administrative reforms, but precipitation might throw things back and lead to a recrudescence of chauvinism in Turkey". Parker sided with Mallet by arguing that the circumstances in Macedonia were different from those in Albania so far as the number of nationalities was concerned.²

Nevertheless, Mallet showed also some anxiety for the Macedonians. He deprecated the suggestion of making representations to the Porte in favour of a discussion with Tewfik in order to approve the reforms granted to the Albanians and expressed the hope that reform policy in Macedonia would also be adopted. Mallet refused to take an alarmist view of the situation which was not justified by the facts, though he admitted that

¹Marling to Nicolson, 24.7.12. Pte., ibid. Marling to Grey, 27.7.12. no. 632. Buchanan to Grey, 9.8.12, tel. no. 284. Minutes by Mallet and Grey. Marling to Nicolson, 14.8.12, Pte. NP, op.cit.

²Buchanan to Grey, 21.8.12, tel. no. 298. Minutes by Norman and Mallet, 22.8. Grey to Buchanan, 26.8.12, no. 284, very conf. BD.IX. i. no. 655. (Minute by Grey, FO/371/1482). Grey to Barelly, 26.8.12. no. 27. Bertie to Grey, 23.8.12, tel. no. 102. BD. op.cit., no. 649.

the situation was "somewhat confusing and not helped by the "jealousy and rivalry" between Berchtold and Sazonov. Grey held the opinion that the Porte was the real master of the situation and if further "provocation" was avoided all would be quiet.¹ The concessions which were given to the Albanians (14 August) weakened the authority of the Porte in the European provinces of the Empire to the extent that even Marling, who was earlier sure that the Porte could cope with the Albanian question, came to the conclusion that the decentralization of the Ottoman Empire was perhaps the cure to its illness. But there was no strong government which could carry out such a policy.²

Meanwhile, the unsettled situation in the European provinces and the growing ferment amongst the population convinced the Montenegrin Government that the time was ripe to strike at the Ottoman rule. Contacts had been made with Bulgaria in May when the Porte had decided to renew their annual subsidy to King Nicholas. On 11 June a joint commission signed an Ottoman-Montenegrin Protocol which promised to settle the controversial frontiers of the two countries. Delayed ratification on the Porte's side, because of anxieties as to Albanian reaction, led the Montenegrins to seize the opportunity to fulfill long-delayed national goals. They launched by July-August a series of attacks on Ottoman border positions which culminated in the most serious clash at Berana early in August.³

The frontier incident at Berana convinced Mallet of the necessity of Marling's strong language to the Porte. He did not challenge Norman's assertion that the Ottoman behaviour was "A return to Committee methods". But Britain was not ready to take the initiative or to act outside the European Concert. The Foreign Office and Marling accepted Miss Durham's

¹Grey to Buchanan, 27.8.12, tel. no. 758. BD., *ibid.*, no. 660. Buchanan to Grey, 28.8.12, tel. no. 315. Minute, 29.8., *ibid.*, no. 665.

²Marling to Grey, 29.9.12, no. 801. Minute by Vansittart, 12.10. Most of the Albanian's demands were accepted, primarily the dissolution of Parliament, except the impeachment of Hakki and Said and the regional military service, Skendi, *op.cit.* pp. 432 ff.

³Thaden, *op.cit.* pp. 103/4. *idem.* "Montenegro: Russia's Troublesome Ally, 1910-1912". *Journal of Central European Affairs*. (1958), pp. 111-33.

anti-Ottoman view of the Berana incident, and not the opposite interpretation of Summa, the Vice-Consul at Scutari. "Nothing is trustworthy", Grey commented, "except the account of a British eye-witness and even that is not always trustworthy". Miss Durham's influence in the Foreign Office was increasing although only her testimony of the events was accepted, not her conclusion that the Powers should put an end to Ottoman rule in Europe.¹

c. The Policy of British Interests

A few days after the beginning of the Tripoli War the India Office, at the behest of the Indian Government, suggested to the Foreign Office that the present moment was most opportune for forcing the recognition of British rights in the Gulf and Mesopotamia on the Porte. Nicolson emphasized that an ultimatum, taking advantage of the Porte's difficulties with Italy, would be "most unwise" but agreed that Lowther should take the first favourable opportunity to urge "very strongly" a settlement of British claims on the demolition of British property at Baghdad. Lowther supported the Foreign Office's attitude and explained the extreme policy suggested by Lorimer, Resident and Consul-General at Baghdad, as the result of his experience in India, where "toleration and patience cannot be carried beyond a certain point". The Ottoman submission to the British demand for compensation for the Baghdad demolition was received, however, by the Foreign Office as a proof of the Porte's moderation.² As to the Baghdad Railway Lowther did not regard as an insoluble question, since he was sure that the CUP honestly wished to come to terms and to gain economic freedom. They complained that they were in a vicious circle as they found

¹Same to same, 26.8.12, tel. no. 336. Minutes, 27.8. de Salis to Grey, 10.8.12, no. 29. Minutes BD. ibid., no. 606. Bertie to Grey, 29.8.12. tel. no. 110. ibid., no. 669. Marling to Grey, 12.9.12, no. 779, conf. minutes, 24.9. Miss Durham to Nevinston, 4.9.12, FO/371/1497/39179. Marling to Grey, 10.9.12, no. 772.

²India Office to Foreign Office, 17.10.11. FO/371/1236/40988. Government of India, 12.10.11. Minutes, 18.10. ibid. Lowther to Grey, 22.11.11. no. 949. Minutes, 30.12. Same to same, 1.12.11. tel. no. 328. Minutes.

themselves obstructed from carrying out reforms without the much needed funds.¹ This argument never found an echo in the Foreign Office, where British interests were adhered to with strictness and rigidity. But the British eagerness to come to an agreement before the Baghdad Railway reached Baghdad was an important point which led to British concessions. When Assim told Lowther that the Porte could not agree to the distribution of the shares proposed by Britain and to their demand as to the evacuation of Babiyan, the Foreign Office was ready to give up on the former point provided British trade was assured against any discrimination on rates on all railways in the Asiatic provinces, and above all if the Porte would agree to all British demands in the Gulf.²

On 15 April the Porte submitted its reply to the British proposals of July last. Contrary to British hopes of a "very fair" attitude on the Porte's part the Ottoman reply was disappointing. Nicolson had thought it would have a "good effect on the moslem world". But Parker intimated to Djevad on its "marked divergency" from the British Memo of last July, and Mallet commented ominously: "We can afford to be stiff, because Turkey must be anxious to come to terms with HMG at this critical juncture in her foreign relations.....we shall never have a better opportunity for negotiation". The division of opinions were considerable indeed: the Porte refused to change their view that the share-capital of the Baghdad-Gulf line should be distributed between the four Powers, whilst the British insisted on five Powers system which should give a majority to the Entente.

There was deadlock over the Gulf questions too: the British complained that the Ottoman reply ignored much of the British Memo on Koweit. Britain, though recognising Ottoman suzerainty and the Sheikh as

¹Lowther to Nicolson, 31.1.12. Pte. LP.

²Lowther to Grey, 23.1.12. tel. no. 9. Minute by Parker, FO/371/1484. Board of Trade to Foreign Office, 12.1.12, ibid./1723.

an Ottoman Kaimakem, could not tolerate any interference with the succession of the internal administration and "complete autonomy" of the Sheikh. Opinion was also divergent on whether the islands of Babiyan and Warba should be included in the Sheikh's territory or not. Disagreement existed also as to the status of El Katr and particularly of El Bidaa. Britain regarded the Gulf itself as an entirely British sphere of influence, as Lord Lansdowne had stated in the House of Lords on 5 May 1903. Therefore she resented the Porte's desire to carry out the policing of the Gulf together with her. The establishment of any naval base or a fortified port would be regarded by Britain as a "very grave menace" to her interests as much as it had been nine years ago.¹

In seeking a settlement with the Porte on the Railway and Gulf questions the British Government meant to achieve an Ottoman recognition for her interests in that area, but she was certainly not looking for a rapprochement with the Porte as Sazonov had suspected, and Grey promptly refuted. Sazonov welcomed the so-called rapprochement as he thought that this would mean that British influence would supplant German influence at Constantinople. It was ultimately agreed that Basra should be the terminus of the Railway, but the danger of German participation in the prolongation of the line from Basra to the Gulf still existed.² Britain's decision to pursue a settlement with the Porte on these questions was made after it was realized that the strong measures suggested by the India Office and the Government of India were unpractical since nothing more than the occupation of Fao and El Bidaa could be done. The Admiralty also warned that in time of war no vessels except the sloops could be spared for military

¹ Nicolson to de Bunsen, 27.3.12. Pte. NP, 354. Nicolson to Buchanan, 27.3.12. Pte. *ibid.*, Buchanan to Grey, 27.3.12, tel. no. 121, conf. BD. *op.cit.*, no. 44. Aide-Memoire communicated by Tewfik Pasha, 15.4.12. Minutes 23-25.4. BD.X.ii. no. 47. Parker to Djevad, 18.4.12. Pte. *ibid.*, no. 48. Joint Minutes by Hirtzel and Parker on the Turkish Government Memo. 24.4.12. *ibid.*, no. 50. Lowther to Nicolson, 8.5.12. Pte. LP. Nicolson to Lowther, 13.5.12. Pte., *ibid.* Same to same, 1.4.12. Pte. Busch, *op.cit.* p. 330 ff.

² Buchanan to Grey, 16.4.12. Pte. and Secret tel. FO/371/1484/1630. Grey to Buchanan, 17.4.12. Pte. tel. *ibid.*, Memo by Parker, 11.5.12. BD. *op.cit.*, no. 52.

operations in the Gulf.¹

Meanwhile, Britain was defining her final attitude in the questions of the Persian Gulf and Mesopotamian Railway. This had undergone a considerable transformation since the last British Memo of July 1911. It had been formulated after long and tedious discussion with both the India Office and the Board of Trade. There were also differences between the India Office and the Government of India. Hardinge did not care much about the Baghdad-Gulf line as long as it did not reach beyond Basra. His main concern was that the Ottomans should be entirely excluded from the Gulf itself, particularly El Katr. Lord Crewe on the other hand demanded what Britain had given up officially last July: a minimum of 50% in the Baghdad-Gulf line. Grey naturally resented Lord Crewe's attitude on the ground that the aim of the British Government was to secure a guarantee against preferential treatment prejudicial to British and Indian trade, which would ^{not} be solved by a 50% share. The acceptance of the Secretary of India's views might, moreover, lead to an open rupture with the Porte. The intrasigent line of the India Office was illustrated by Hirtzel's reaction to the Ottoman reply: "Let's chuck it [he said to Parker] into the fire".² The India Office finally agreed to the Foreign Office's views concerning the Railway, but not to its policy regarding Koweit. Here their demand was for a greater Koweit, which was rejected as "preposterous" by the Foreign Office.³

On 18 July the British counter-proposals were conveyed to the Porte. Britain gave in on participation as a result of the Porte's opposition to the five Powers' participation and the Entente's rejection of any

¹India Office to Foreign Office, 7.3.12, minute by Mallet, 11.3. FO/371/1490/10200. Government of India to Crewe, 15.2.12, no. 24. Secret, *ibid.*, Admiralty to India Office, 2.4.12, *ibid.*/18365/. India Office to Foreign Office, 2.4.12. FO/371/1492/14179.

²Hardinge to Nicolson, 14.5.12. Pte. WP, 355. Foreign Office to India Office, 16.5.12. FO/371/1484/16000. India Office to Foreign Office, 21.5.12. Minute by Parker, 22.5, *ibid.*/21766/. Foreign Office to India Office, 30.5.12, *ibid.*

³See also Parker's letter, 26.5, quoted in Busch, *op.cit.*, p.333.

exclusive Anglo-German combination. In return Britain demanded the exclusion of any differential treatment in all railways in the Asiatic provinces, the admission of two Britons to the board of the future Baghdad-Basra railway company, that no branch be built beyond Basra without British consent and permission for another three British steamers to navigate between Baghdad and Basra. Britain hoped that the Porte would appreciate their "sacrifice" over the Railway in order to satisfy British demands on El Katr and Koweit. As to the Gulf waters Britain insisted that she must control and police it alone. If the Porte agreed to these conditions and to the removal of the veto on the borrowing powers of Egypt, the British Government would agree to the increase of Customs duties on British goods to 15% for 7 years.¹ Nicolson was of the opinion that the present moment was favourable for "inducing" the Ottomans, who were "rather deserted and isolated and in sad need of funds and in considerable difficulties in the interior", to accept the British proposals. But he realized that a new administration at Constantinople might cause considerable delay in the Gulf and Railway negotiations.²

The Board of Trade also presented certain difficulties with their insistence on a specific tariff for cotton goods. The India Office initially rejected this demand since it might put the main objects of the proposals at risk. The Foreign Office in an effort to compromise between the two Ministries decided not to include this in the general reply since it might introduce a new matter into the negotiations which were considered chiefly political in nature. It was therefore included in a different letter to the Porte without entailing any conditions.³

¹Hardinge to Nicolson, 14.5.12. Pte. NP, 355. Foreign Office to India Office, 16.5.12. FO/371/1484/16000. India Office to Foreign Office, 21.5.12. Minute by Parker, 22.5, ibid./21766/. Foreign Office to India Office, 30.5.12. ibid. Grey to Tewfik, 18.7.12. conf. BD.X.ii. no. 55.

²Nicolson to Lowther, 24.6.12. Pte., op.cit., Nicolson to Marling, 22.7.12, Pte. NP. 357.

³Board of Trade to Foreign Office, 8.7.12, op.cit./29185. India Office to Foreign Office, 12.7.12, ibid./29769. Grey to Marling, 18.7.12. no. 333. BD. op.cit., no. 56.

d. Britain and the Young Turks

Lowther's antipathy to the Young Turks was raised again by Leon Ostorog, until recently legal adviser to the Porte, and "much behind the scenes", who claimed that the British Embassy was again out of contact with the Ottoman political world. He believed, with "many" others, as Mallet admitted, that Lowther had from the first taken a decidedly anti-CUP line. In the Foreign Office, however, it was felt that there was no turning the clock back. Mallet believed that the further alienation of the new regime from England was inevitable. He did not seem to share the view that Lowther was responsible for the worsening of the relations with the Young Turks, and was rather inclined to blame the Young Turks themselves:

.....short of telling Italy that HMG will not allow the annexation of Tripoli, I do not see that we can take any active line for the present. What good did we get from our Balkan policy 4 years [sic*] ago?.... no one remembers that we got 1 million for Turkey and the moral is obvious. Far from alienating Turkey from the Triple Alliance, it drew her closer and the result of Italy's action may [be] the same.... I should not be surprised at any developments in the direction of closer understanding with Germany. But everything depends on the internal situation in Turkey and that is an unknown quantity.¹

Lowther had meanwhile, changed his opinion on the coming struggle between the moderates and extremists, owing to the detente between the Government and opposition in Constantinople. He now concluded that since the CUP were the only organised body in the Empire, they should not be overthrown but rather moderate their views and come to an agreement with the opposition. He favoured the return of Kiamil to power but not through British encouragement, and did not blame the Porte for putting up a fight

¹Ostorog to P.C. Sarell (British Consul, Dunkirk and at Constantinople 1883-1901), 31.8.11. Sarell to Crowe, 7.9.11. Minutes by Maxwell and Mallet. FO/371/1262/. Sarell to Crowe, 11.10.11., *ibid.*, 41976. Minutes by Mallet (14.10) and Grey (20.10). Later Ostorog changed his mind and condemned the CUP: L. Ostorog, The Turkish Problem (London, 1919).

*Italics mine.

for Tripoli.¹

In the face of the growing animosity to the Ottomans, the Porte made a "curious" but "interesting", suggestion to the British Government to enter an alliance first with Britain and later with the Triple Entente. It added another request for Britain to intervene in Rome to the suggestion. Both requests were rejected by the Foreign Office as "quite out of the question". But they decided not to slam the door in the Ottomans' face, but to reply in a "very courteous and friendly manner", in order not to impair Tcharykov's overtures to the Porte. In his reply to the Porte, Grey stated that Britain had decided upon a "strict neutrality" in the Tripoli War and therefore could not enter into any negotiations which would lead to a departure from this. But once the war was over both countries could renew the discussion for better relations. Although the British reply was only a matter of politeness, the Foreign Office was most careful to avoid using the dangerous term "alliance".² The Ottoman offer, however, reminded Bertie that Britain was in an "awkward position" in its relations with the Porte regarding her engagements under the Paris and the Berlin treaties.³

Though the Foreign Office rejected any idea of an Ottoman alliance, the Young Turks still had one strong supporter in the British Cabinet: Winston Churchill, the First Lord of the Admiralty (who disliked Lowther) and who claimed that the members of the Cabinet had taken the question of "arrangement" with the Porte too lightly. He called upon Grey not to consider this question from an "Armagedon [sic] point of view" since the situation had greatly changed and would be subject to further changes.

¹ Nicolson to Cartwright, 16.10.11. Pte. NP, 351. Lowther to Nicolson, 18.10.11. LP. Lowther to Grey, 20.10.11. no. 741.

² Communication from Tewfik Pasha, 31.10.11, BD.IX.i. App. IV. Memo' by Grey (written by Nicolson and approved by Asquith), 2.11.11. ibid. Nicolson to Hardinge, 2.11.11. Pte. NP, 351. Grey to O'Beirne, 3.11.11. no. 286. Most Secret. BD. ibid., pp. 780/1. Minute by Nicolson, 2.11.11. ibid. Thaden wrongly believes in Britain's sincerity to conclude an alliance with the Porte once the Tripoli War was over. Thaden, op.cit., p.51.

³

Bertie to Nicolson, 8.11.11. Pte. BP, 181.

Turkey has much to offer us....we must not forget that we are the greatest Mahometan power in the world. We are the only one who can really help her and guide her. And if she wants to turn to England and to Russia and if Russia is herself anxious for association we should carry Turkey in some sort of way into the system of the Triple Entente....Turkey is the great land weapon which the Germans could use against us.^{*} Italy is not likely to be worth much for or against anyone for some time to come.¹

Clearly, Churchill had somewhat changed his mind, since he had written "We must prefer Italy to Turkey on all grounds - moral and unmoral",² three days before the war began. But nothing was further from the minds of the Foreign Office than an entente between England and the Porte, and Churchill had to bow to the inevitable. Secretly the sympathies of the Foreign Office were clearly pro-Italian. Nicolson regarded as unfortunate the fact that Italy was losing sympathy in English public opinion as a result of reports of the massacre of Arabs near Tripoli.³

Hardinge, the Viceroy of India, also felt some anxiety about the Italian aggression. "In all these wars against Turkey it is we out in India", he complained to Nicolson, "who in reality have to pay the piper". Hardinge could not resist expressing some sympathy for the Ottomans:

Had I been a Turk I should have strongly advocated an invasion of Thessaly, and I would have told the Powers that I should be ready to clear out as soon as the Italians cleared out of Tripoli. I suppose, however, that the Bulgarians would probably have done the same thing and the confusion become still greater than ever. If the Italians commence operations against the Turks in the Archipelago I hope that we shall be sufficiently firm not to allow the Italians to seize and hold any premanent possession, such as Tenedos or Mitylene.⁴

Another attempt by Ostrorog to bring about a volte face in Britain's attitude towards the CUP ended with failure since the Foreign Office

¹Churchill to Grey, 4.11.11. Secret. GP. 87 Djavid to Churchill, 29.10.11. Churchill to Djavid, 19.11.11. W. Churchill, The World Crisis (London, 1923), p. 480.

²Churchill to Nicolson, 26.9.11. Pte. BD. op.cit., no.240.

³Nicolson to de Bunsen, 1.11.11. Pte. NP., op.cit.

⁴Hardinge to Nicolson, 2.11.11. Pte. NP, 352.

*Churchill's italics.

rejected his claim that the CUP should be backed "unreservedly" because it was bound to win. The Foreign Office was already convinced that "There is not much reason for us to thank the Committee for their behaviour to us in the past", apart from the fact that Parker, who met him in 1910, was "most unfavourably" impressed by him.¹

But the CUP according to Riza, had also a good reason to regret the British point of view. In a statement described by Lowther as "a sample.....of the apology for the CUP" Riza had written:

Necessary reforms....have not yet been carried out. The delay is due to lack of money, time and peace and order. The responsibility for the lack of peace and order rests on Europe, for the Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Crete and Tripoli questions have had a baleful influence on our internal security.

We thought that the Great Powers who tried to force us in trying to carry out reforms under the old regime would support us in trying to do our duty. Yet even England, who had guaranteed to do so by the Treaty of Cyprus, has given us no help.... As we felt we had only ourselves to depend upon, we have been obliged to devote our revenue to our army; and for this, I repeat, Europe is entirely responsible.... You ought not to forget history. Remember what the great Cromwell was forced to do to assure peace and progress in England. Ireland and Scotland ran with blood.... Think of the awful quarrels of parties in the Convention. Paris saw nearly 3000 executions.... Think, too, of the civil war of the Commune. Read once more what so-called civilised Powers have done in the colonies, beginning with the shameful opium war; and compare these deeds with the tyrannies you attribute without proof to the Young Turks.²

At this stage Lowther showed more readiness to accept the realities of Ottoman politics than ever before: "I think that the best thing is for the Cabinet to be purely CUP. They will feel the sense of responsibility and, while not good, their opponents are not better". He also agreed with Nicolson that the possibility of complications in the Balkans was remote.

The establishment, moreover, of the Mission of Enquiry and Reform

¹Ostrorog to Sarell, (n.d.), minutes by Norman, Parker and Nicolson, 11.-12.12.11. FO/371/1263/49300.

²Open letter in The Tanin, 12.1.12, in reply to Mr. E.G. Millholland; in: Lowther to Grey, 16.1.12. no. 38. FO/371/1490.

³Lowther to Nicolson, 31.1.12. Pte. LP.

to the European provinces of the Ottoman Empire under the presidency of Hadji Adil Bey, the Minister of the Interior, infused new blood into the somewhat forgotten hopes of the Foreign Office for the new regime to reform the Empire. Lowther expressed the hope to Assim that the Mission would be more productive in results than the former commissions. The Foreign Office was even more satisfied. Grey hoped that the good results of the Mission could enable the Government to publish a favourable Blue Book. But a similar intention to send such a mission to the Armenian provinces as well did not find the same approval in the Foreign Office. It was regarded as "very unlikely" that the Porte could solve the dispute between the Armenians and the Kurds regarding the proprietorship of lands.¹

Still criticism of the new regime was not abated in the Foreign Office. When The Times on 3 February published a Memorial to the Sultan and the Presidents of both Ottoman Chambers, calling upon them not to waste the unique opportunity of convincing the West that the new regime was not a failure, the Foreign Office supported it, though Assim had referred to it as an exaggeration.²

The "big-stick" election of early 1912 for the Ottoman Chamber proved what was long expected in the Foreign Office: a complete victory for the CUP through undemocratic methods. Lowther had inclined to support their victory out of the fear that had they been defeated the Empire's external enemies might be encouraged. Lamb had viewed the possible victory of the CUP as dangerous to the future of the country, since it would be followed

¹Lowther to Grey, 12.2.12, no. 133. FO/371/1491. Grey to Lowther, 19.2.12, no. 66. Lowther to Grey, 12.2.12, no. 135, minute by Norman, 20.2. At the beginning of August 1911, the Foreign Office had refused to publish the reports of H.M.'s consuls in the Ottoman Empire for 1910, as they might give "great umbrage" to the Porte. Their despatches were "in nearly every case....severely critical of the Young Turk regime and of the policy of the Committee". The Commons were informed that such a publication would not achieve "any useful purpose" and the Members of the House were advised to find consolation in the already published Consular trade reports. Parliamentary question by McCallum Scott, 3.8.11. Minutes, 1.8. FO/371/1261/31416.

²Same to same, 19.2.12, no. 144. Minute by Norman, 28.2. N. Buxton also signed the Memorial. Same to same, 23.1.12, no. 63. Minute by Parker, 6.2.

by local insurrections all over the country which would be suppressed ruthlessly and thus invite foreign intervention.

In the Foreign Office the image of the CUP remained unchanged: "The Committee have triumphed but by methods which might have been expected under the old regime but are unbecoming in the new".¹ Nevertheless, the Foreign Office preferred not to publish any Blue Books on Macedonia and Albania since they were anxious not to annoy the Porte on the eve of the renewed Railway and Gulf negotiations. The feeling in the Foreign Office was that relations with the Porte were improving and that nothing should be done to disturb them. Even the "topographical" work of the British Vice-Consul at Mosul would have to be sacrificed.²

Noel Buxton had meanwhile changed his views on the CUP's role in Macedonia. He seemed to come nearer to the viewpoint that the "persecution of Christian subjects was more methodical and systematic than the persecution under Abdul-Hamid had ever been." This volte face found the Foreign Office somewhat divided between Vansittart who, believing in Hadji Adil's Mission, regarded it as exaggerated, and Norman, who did not. The official line decided upon was that nothing could be done by Britain alone. As long as it was impossible to bring the Powers together on this question³ what had seemed to Britain a promising situation in the Balkans was no longer so.

In these desperate circumstances it was not surprising that Assim appealed to Lowther for an entente in view of what Assim called Europe's decision to divide the Ottoman Empire. Lowther naturally used the excellent pretext that as long as the Ottoman Empire was at war no entente could be discussed. No one in London really thought that an entente was practical even after the termination of the war. One curious exception

¹ Lowther to Grey, 27.3.12, no. 255. Lamb to Lowther, 11.3.12, no. 39. Minute by Mallet, 12.4. Same to same, 18.4.12, no. 324. Same to same, 24.5.12, no. 435. Minute by Norman, 10.6. Lewis, *op.cit.*, p. 221 ff.

² Parliamentary Question by McCallum Scott, 25.3.12. Minute by Norman, 23.3. FO/371/1493. Lowther to Grey, 27.3.12, no. 259. Minute by Norman, 1.4.

³ Minute by Tyrrell, 10.4.12. Minutes, 15.4. FO/371/1483/15784. Buxton was attacked by the "Jeune Turc": same to same, 23.5.12, no. 138.

was Kitchener, always an independent figure (who had aspired for the post of Ambassador at Constantinople after the 1908 Revolution). He intimated to Asquith the importance of an entente with the Porte after the Tripoli war, but somewhat naively called for a limited entente: "We should of course take no responsibility for complications in Turkey in Europe; but we might be very useful to Turkey in Arabia, Syria and the Far East".¹

The truth was that in their isolation the Young Turks were searching in vain for some assistance, if not for an entente, and even Talaat, that "idol of the Jacobin party", as Lowther called him, was able to summon up some pro-English proclivities. But Lowther, who disliked him, naturally did not take him seriously, although Talaat expressed his satisfaction that Marschall, whom he accused of interfering in Ottoman affairs had left Constantinople. Only Jahid, the notorious "chauvinist", and editor of The Tanin, who called upon the Ottomans not to search for allies but to devote themselves to reforms was considered by the Foreign Office to have used "sensible" language.²

Moreover, the Foreign Office had only one alliance in mind: the Triple Entente, which had to be further consolidated in view of Germany's ambition for naval preponderance. Thus the report that Russia intended to build "a very considerable" fleet was welcomed by Nicolson as a blessing, since it would relieve the German naval pressure.³

By 28 June the Porte requested Britain's consent for the appointment of an Englishman as a president of an Inspection Commission with two English assistants, to reorganise the Ministry of the Interior. Mallet was quite enthusiastic to extend the work of administrative reform started by Crawford and Graves. His enthusiasm was not diminished after Lowther had warned

¹Lowther to Nicolson, 12.6.12. Pte. LP. Magnus, Kitchener (London, 1958), p.230. Kitchener to Grey, 2.6.12. Pte. BD.X. ii. no.392.

²Lowther to Nicolson, 12.6.12. Pte. op.cit. Lowther to Grey, 17.6.12. no. 153. Minute by Norman, 24.6.

³Nicolson to Cartwright, 24.6.12. Pte. NP.357. Ostrorog to Sarell, 5.6.12. Minute by Mallet, 11.6. FO/371/1495/26457. Nicolson to O'Beirne, 18.7.12. Pte. NP. 357.

that the matter had to be treated with great caution. The Ambassador claimed that the Ottoman application was not an administrative but a political question, and a foreigner might be the victim of intrigues. Norman suggested they accept the Ottoman application. Without underrating Lowther's reservations, he argued that if they were appointed in an advisory capacity and not in an executive one they might find it difficult to overcome obstruction. Mallet admitted that the moment was not very opportune and the future uncertain but nothing catastrophic could be foreseen "as Turkey is a great military power and her present misfortunes may be the prelude to revival". He argued that if the adviser were a victim of intrigues or a "shield" for abuses in Macedonia, he could be withdrawn. Grey agreed that the Porte should not be discouraged but he was preoccupied with the mutiny of the army in Monastir. His reaction was, however, much less enthusiastic than Mallet's:

The Turks are now in great trouble and are in a
reluctant mood and turning to us, but out of
trouble their good resolution vanish.

When the devil was sick
The devil a saint would be,
But when the devil was well
The devil a saint was he.

The reply which was sent to the Porte indicated a compromise between the divided opinions of the Foreign Office. It was hoped that the obscure situation at Constantinople would be clarified in the meantime, since there was no imminent catastrophe and this would make "a revival possible".¹ But there was a considerable relief both in the Embassy and the Foreign Office when the new liberal Government under Ghazi Moukhtar decided to withdraw the application, for it had claimed that the inspectors could not be engaged in administrative functions without being involved in political matters. Mallet alone expressed regret that the opportunity for "a real

¹ Tewfik to Grey, 28.6.12. FO/371/1496/27643. Lowther to Grey, 29.6.12. no. 558. conf. Minutes, 2.7. ibid. /27983. Grey to Lowther, 6.7.12. no. 295.

improvement" in the administration could not be carried out, though he admitted that "great difficulties" would be involved. Later on the Porte renewed the application and the British agreed, but the whole matter was suspended because of the outbreak of the Balkan Wars.¹

Mallet was convinced that the application for British advisers might be an opportunity for Britain to recover her "lost credit" at Constantinople. "If Turkey continues to exist as a Power to be reckoned with, the importance of maintaining cordial relations with her is obvious, but a necessary condition of our friendship must be reform". But on the next day he added another reservation to the above: the hope that the Tripoli War would not cause a general conflagration.²

Meanwhile at Constantinople dramatic changes took place which saw the temporary defeat of the CUP. The crisis of July 1912 had its roots in the formation in November 1911 of the Liberal Union party which very soon won an important victory against the CUP in a by-election where the CUP candidate, the Minister for the Interior, was defeated. The CUP who felt that their grip on the country had been threatened, tried to rectify their shaky position by the dissolution of Parliament and the appointment of Talaat, Djavid, Adil and Said Halim to the Cabinet. However, the 'big-stick election' of 1912, in which the CUP secured an overwhelming majority in Parliament, proved to be the cause for the CUP failure. The undemocratic methods used by the CUP in ruling the country and the unsatisfactory position of the Porte's foreign relations led to the creation of the Group of Saviour Officers. In the Foreign Office it was made clear that Britain's role could not be more than that of a spectator. The CUP tried to calm the Saviour Officers by new legislation, demanded by the latter,

¹Marling to Nicolson, 13.8.12, M. ibid./33374. 24.8. Grey to Lowther, 3.9.12. no. 417. Tewfik to Nicolson, 23.9.12, op.cit./40281 (minutes, 26.9.)

²Goschen to Grey, 25.6.12. no. 306. Minute by Mallet, 2.7. Lowther to Grey, 24.6.12. no. 533. Minutes by Norman and Mallet, 3.7.

which aimed at preventing the army's intervention in politics. But the discontented officers, who had already tried to obtain the support of the Embassy but had been discouraged by the Military Attaché, were not satisfied with this concession and Shevket had to give up his position as Minister of War. (9 July). Despite the crisis Said managed to secure a decided vote of confidence in Parliament on 15 July. Nevertheless he submitted his resignation two days later after some threatening moves of the army and a declaration made ^{by the} Saviours Officers to the Sultan and to the press.¹

Chazi Moukhtar's appointment as a Grand Vizier on 22 July was received with little enthusiasm in the Foreign Office, although his Cabinet, which was anti-CUP in nature consisted of both Kiamil and Hilmi. Its declaration of policy promised the application of the Constitution and more amiable policy towards the Entente Powers. Parker, however, though regarding it as "satisfactory" in foreign policy, thought it had been "imprudent" to say in public it was not pro-German. Norman also reacted quite unfavourably: "It is an excellent programme and if the new Government carry it out they have a good chance of saving Turkey; but we must not forget that the CUP at the start had a good programme also and that the present Government, like the Committee, are Turks".² Nicolson considered the new Cabinet as merely a transitory government formed chiefly to deal with the dangerous situation and to eliminate the CUP from any interference in the administration of the country. He was glad that Tewfik had rejected the suggestion to form a Cabinet, as this was a "risky" post when the CUP might act in desperation.³ When Giers, the new Russian Ambassador, later suggested that the British Charge should try to bring Kiamil to power,

¹Tyrrell to Lowther, 27.4.12. no. 32. conf. in: Lowther to Grey, 1.5.12. no. 371 conf. Minutes, 11.5. FO/371/1486. Ahmad, The Young Turks, pp. 99 ff. Lewis, pp. 221 ff.

²Marling to Grey, 30.7.12, tel. no. 260. Minute by Parker, 31.7. Tewfik to Grey, 23.7.12. Minute by Norman, 24.7. FO/371/1496/31368.

³Nicolson to Buchanan, 30.7.12. Pte. NP, 358. Nicolson to Granville, 30.7.12. Pte., ibid. Nicolson to Marling, 22.7.12. Pte. NP, 357.

replacing Ghazi Moukhtar's weak Cabinet, Marling refused to do so. Marling, with the Foreign Office's approval, argued that this might involve the British Government with great responsibility whilst she could only give the Porte moral support. Moreover, after Ghazi Moukhtar's fall Britain might well be identified with the new government's opponents. He also doubted very much Kiamil's ability to cope with the Balkan crisis. But he welcomed the recent coup: "This is really the counter-revolution, not the tragi-comedy of April 1909". The Foreign Office concluded that it would be better to leave the present Government to face the crisis and to keep Kiamil in reserve, though they admitted that the situation at Constantinople was "very obscure and uncertain".¹

Britain's attitude towards the Ghazi Moukhtar's Government was one of expectancy and doubt. The Grand Vizier's promise of fair elections and a purge of CUP adherents from the administration was received with mixed feelings: "This is a step in the right direction but there is a danger that the party of the present Government may in the end err in precisely the same way as has the Committee". Nevertheless, the predominant view in the Foreign Office was that of Mallet: "Any drastic attempt to solve the problem [of reform] is bound to make the situation worse".²

e. From Crisis to War

Where Miss Durham was not present as a British eye-witness the Foreign Office found it impossible to come to a definite view who was responsible. Early in August the situation in Macedonia worsened as a result of a bomb thrown by Macedonian revolutionaries at Kochana. This was followed by a massacre in which seven hundred people were killed and

¹ Marling to Grey, 20.9.12, tel. no. 384. Minutes, 21.9. Nicolson to Hardinge, 19.9.12. Pte. NP, 358. Marling to Nicolson, 7.8.12. Pte., ibid.

² Marling to Grey, 31.8.12, tel. no. 352. Minute by Norman, 2.9. FO/371/1509, Paget to Grey, 28.8.12, no. 51. Minute, 3.9.

wounded. Parker accepted the reports of the British Consuls at Salonica and Uskub that it was the work of the CUP. Norman, on the other hand, mentioned the possibility of the Bulgarian revolutionaries being responsible in order to bring about the Powers' intervention. The British Charge at Sofia reported that if the Kochana massacre were repeated it might be difficult to check the Bulgarians. Parker had his own solution: "The best way to prevent a repetition of the incident would probably be to hang Djavid and Talaat", who were now in opposition. Further evidence convinced even Mallet that the local CUP was responsible for the massacre.¹ Grey accepted Parker's view that the Porte should be informed of "the extreme importance" of punishing "severely" all officials found guilty. But he accepted Mallet's view that the Bulgarians should also be warned that they would lose Europe's sympathy if they abandoned a pacific policy. The warning to Bulgaria sounded as if it were support for the Ghazi Moukhtar's Government, since it relied on the "most categorical" assurances on the part of the Porte to punish the guilty and professed the British belief in the new "era of reforms" initiated by the anti-CUP Government. Any continuation of the Bulgarian agitation would encourage the "reactionary" party in the Ottoman Empire. However, the Kochana massacre increased the pressure of the opposition against the Bulgarian Government to demand autonomy to Macedonia or to start war.²

When Berchtold put forward his proposals for the solution of the crisis the British Government opposed his claim for the "political" decentralization of Albania. The Foreign Office supported the Porte's claim that autonomy was out of the question. Grey was of the opinion that "what is wanted is good government with special arrangements suited to

¹Marling to Grey, 10.8.12, tel. no. 278. Minutes, 12.8. BD., *ibid.*, no. 608. Barclay to Grey, 10.8.12, tel. no. 20. Minute, 12.8. Parker repeated his "prudent course" of hanging Djavid and Talaat on 28 August: Marling to Grey, 20.8.12, no. 706, Minute. Same to same, 10.8.12, no. 681. Minute 20.8. Marling to Nicolson, 14.8.12, Pte. NP, 358.

²Grey to Marling, 28.8.12. tel. no. 529. BD., *ibid.*, no. 666. (Written by Parker). Grey to Barclay, 31.8.12. tel. no. 55. *ibid.*, no. 681 (Written by Mallet). Thaden, pp.104-5.

different districts, such as Albania." He believed that the Ghazi Moukhtar's Government would agree to "administrative" decentralization which was needed if "elasticity" was to replace the former "rigid" policy of the CUP. Britain's policy was now optimistic in its approach. Grey's attitude was that the anti-CUP Government of Ghazi Moukhtar deserved another chance and, in return for Ottoman self-reform, the Powers would use "all" their influence to secure peace in the Balkans. It was Mallet who succeeded in convincing Grey not to support any intervention at Constantinople aiming at autonomy. Russia and France were informed that Britain could not join any formal representation to the Porte which might create difficulties for Ghazi Moukhtar's Government "by exciting the chauvinism of the reactionary party".¹

Berchtold denied that he intended autonomy and intervention in the European provinces of the Ottoman Empire. He stated that he favoured a "moral pressure" of Europe on the Porte to give the Christians fair representation in the coming elections. "I do not think", Mallet commented with Grey's approval, "that we should have anything to do with putting pressure on Turkey with this object. Count Berchtold will end by driving Turkey into war. Neither M. Sazonov nor Count Berchtold seem to realize what they are doing". On the same grounds the British Government supported the Porte's opposition to a Conference on Balkan affairs.²

When Guéshoff, the Bulgarian Prime Minister, told Barclay that he had lost all faith in the Porte, Mallet dismissed it as an attempt to frighten Britain. Grey had already expressed his view: "If the present Turkish Government can prevent further provocation I do not believe that there will be further trouble before the winter". Thus Mallet's moderate view

¹ Marling to Grey, 20.8.12, tel. no. 313. Minutes, 21.8. BD. *ibid.*, no. 639. Grey to Marling, 21.8.12, no. 382, *ibid.*, no. 646. Grey to Bertie, 21.8.12, no. 407, *ibid.*, no. 644. Same to same, 21.8.12, no. 408, *ibid.*, no. 645. Grey to Marling, 26.8.12, no. 387, *ibid.*, no. 657. Grey to Bertie, 26.8.12, no. 417, *ibid.*, no. 654. Marling to Grey, 1.9.12, tel. no. 358, *ibid.*, no. 687.

² Cartwright to Grey, 29.8.12, tel. no. 70. Minute, 30.8., *ibid.*, no. 672. Bertie to Grey, 29.8.12, tel. no. 112, minute by Mallet, 30.8., *ibid.*, no. 671.

predominated: nothing should be done in the nature of collective intervention which might weaken the liberal government. He was sure that Sazonov did not want war for no good reason and that the crisis could be solved peacefully.¹

Mallet's attitude to the Porte at this phase in Ottoman history did not only stem from the belief that the new regime was still capable of reforming itself but also from the repercussions of the Pan-Islamic nightmare:

The chances against a violent end coming to Turkey in Europe are much the same as in the past. As a Mussulman Power, a catastrophe of this nature would probably be to our disadvantage whereas her gradual decay would not affect us so prejudicially.²

But on 4 September Mallet informed the Ottoman Charge that intervention would have to come sooner or later since the position of the Christian population was "intolerable". The Kochana massacre was brought up as a case in point against the Porte, and Mallet hoped that the Porte would publicly announce its intentions to extend the reform, which had been granted to the Albanians, to the Christians of Macedonia.³

The British attitude towards the question of parliamentary representation for the Christians of Macedonia provides a good index of British policy on the eve of the Balkan Wars. Grey agreed on 4 September to Berchtold's view that the recent elections to the Ottoman Chamber, guided by the CUP, were unfair, but he rejected the latter's opinion that the Christians should be represented according to nationalities, since this might bring up again feuds between them: "Impartial elections should be enough". It would be inaccurate to state, as Temperley did, that Grey on this occasion, when a liberal Cabinet was in power at Constantinople,

¹Barclay to Grey, 3.9.12, tel. no. 34. Minute, 3.9. Buchanan to Grey, 28.8.12, tel. no. 315. Minute, 29.8. BD. op.cit., no. 665. Note communicated by de Fleuriau, 28.8.12, minute by Mallet, ibid., no. 680. Grey to Buchanan, 2.9.12, no. 307, ibid., no. 691. Same to same, 2.9.12, tel. no. 812. Buchanan to Grey, 3.9.12, tel. no. 325. Minutes, 4.9, ibid., no. 694.

²Dering to Grey, 1.9.12, no. 262. Minute, 9.9.

³Grey to Marling, 10.9.12, no. 432.

lost all confidence in the success of Constitutionalism in the Ottoman Empire. Mallet's subsequent comment that the Porte were already working for impartiality in the elections was welcomed by Grey: "We could comment favourably to the Turks on this and encourage them". No further consultation with Austria could be continued, said Grey, without "just administration by Turkey and prevention of incidents such as Kochana and punishment of the guilty".¹ Only the Balkan wars destroyed Grey's belief in Ottoman self-reform in Europe, while in Asia his contention survived even longer.

Marling was much less apprehensive at the alarming attitude originating from Sofia. He attributed the alarm to the pessimistic mood of Nekliudov, the Russian Minister there. He thought that Berchtold's proposals had done more "to bring Turkey to the point of disintegration than anything I can think of with the exception of the Constitution, and it has - quite unintentionally - also strengthened the CUP". As late as 25 September Marling argued that the Bulgarian agitation was "half fictitious". He blamed the Bulgarian Minister in Constantinople and his Military Attaché for spreading rumours of concentration of Ottoman troops in the European provinces.²

Meanwhile, the situation in the Balkans was swiftly moving towards a dangerous crisis. Mallet treated Bulgaria's aggressive policy as late as 17 September as a bluff as he could not believe that they would go to war. Even Norman at this stage refused to call upon the Porte to carry out Article 23 when the Berlin Treaty had already been broken. He argued that this might give a weapon to the CUP for attacking the Government. The Foreign Office considered the Porte's attitude as "satisfactory".³

¹ Grey to Cartwright, 10.9.12, no. 59, *ibid.*, no. 713, p.687. Notes 7-9 and ed. note, p.686. Cf. Temperley, "British Policy towards Parliamentary Rule...." *Cambridge Historical Journal* (1933), p. 191, n. 80.

² Marling to Nicolson, 28.8.12, Pte., *ibid.*, same to same, 11.9.12. Pte., *ibid.*, same to same, 25.9.12, Pte., *ibid.*

³ Granville to Grey, 17.9.12, tel, no. 114, minutes. BD. *ibid.* no. 717. Bertie to Grey, 18.9.12. tel. no. 130. Minute by Norman, 19.9, *ibid.*, no. 721. Same to same, 22.9.12, no. 406. Minute by Norman, 23.9, *ibid.*, no. 734.

Nicolson had two good reasons for his anxiety not to press the Porte too much: the "astonishing" interest with which the Moslems in India were watching the British attitude in the Balkan crisis and the damage it might cause to the progress of the Railway and Gulf negotiations. The first one was the more important as Nicolson put it to Grey:

If the Balkan States win our Moslems will reproach us with allowing the Ottoman Empire to be dismembered; while if Turkey wins we shall be reproached for not insisting on Europe permitting her to reap the fruits of her victories as Europe would certainly not do.¹

This argument could not of course be used against the Balkan aggressors. Nicholson preferred to use reform when he spoke to the Bulgarian Minister on 20 September. He claimed that the Ghazi Moukhtar Government was the "best" that the Ottoman Empire had for "generations", and was animated by the "most honest" intentions on the realization of reforms. Moreover, he could promise him that the Powers would "cordially and sincerely encourage Turkey in this excellent direction". He told the Bulgarian Minister that the Bulgarians were deluding themselves if they believed that they were powerful enough to cope with the Ottoman army.²

At this stage the Foreign Office expected the Porte to publish at least an outline of the reforms which they intended to introduce and that those guilty of the Kochana massacre would be punished, thus strengthening the Powers in their efforts to prevent the Balkan States from starting hostilities. The Foreign Office now considered the question of reform as a means to avoid war rather than as an end in itself.³

But the whole situation was entirely changed when the Balkan States decided to mobilize their armies on 30 September, an act which "depressed if not alarmed" the Ottoman Cabinet. By 1 October it was clear in the

¹Nicolson to Hardinge, 19.9.12, Pte., NP, 358. Nicolson to Buchanan, 24.9.12. Pte., *ibid.*, Nicolson to Granville, 24.9.12, Pte., *ibid.* Nicolson to Townley, 24.9.12, Pte., *ibid.* Nicolson to Grey, 1.10.12. Pte., *ibid.*, same to same, 4.10.12. Pte., *ibid.*, Nicolson to Hardinge, 9.10.12. BD.IX, II, no. 10.

²Grey to Barclay, 25.9.12, no. 29. BD., *ibid.*, no. 746.

³Grey to Marling, 23.9.12, tel. no. 648, *ibid.*, no. 735.

Foreign Office that the Porte would now rather fight than grant concessions demanded by the Balkan States. Vansittart felt that the Ottomans should call out all their troops. He ruled out any possibility of the Porte giving in to the Bulgarian ultimatum which included the application of Article 23 of the Berlin Treaty, and a Christian Vali for Macedonia, guaranteed by the Powers. The Foreign Office clearly put all the blame upon the Bulgarians rather than the Porte.¹

When on 1 October the Porte also mobilized, Vansittart thought that it was "absurd" to expect the Ottomans to demobilize when it was the Balkan States who had first mobilized and if peace was to be preserved it could be done only by Sofia. But he also thought that the Powers could enquire unofficially at the Porte whether it could say something more definite on their reform. Grey, however, thought that it was too late and everything possible had already been done.²

On 2 October Nicolson tried again to save the situation with a friendly application to Tewfik for the Porte to declare its intention to introduce reforms and to discuss them with the Powers, and to sign an immediate peace with Italy to calm the situation. Grey, however, could not forget that the Porte was also responsible for the present danger (though he admitted that the immediate responsibility lay with the Balkan States) for not punishing those guilty for the Kochana massacre and for the CUP's "gross misgovernment" in the recent years.³

Meanwhile, Britain agreed to Poincaré's proposals for a communication on the part of the Powers to the Balkan States against war and against territorial benefits from such a war. They also suggested to inform the Porte that the Powers had taken note of the Porte's intention to introduce reforms

¹Lowther to Nicolson, 2.10.12. Pte. LP. Marling to Grey, 25.9.12, no. 810. Minute, 1.10. FO/371/7/1499, same to same, 30.9.12, tel. no. 414. Minute, 1.10. Barclay to Grey, 30.9.12, tel. no. 46. BD., ibid., no. 759.

²Beaumont to Grey, 1.10.12, tel. no. 47. Minute, 2.10. Russell to Grey, 1.10.12, tel. no. 84, minute, 2.10. Paget to Grey, 1.10.12, tel. no. 19, minutes, 2.10.

³Grey to Lowther, 2.10.12, no. 742.

in the spirit of the Article 23 and the laws of 1880. But the Foreign Office demanded omission of the word "Chrétienness" from the text of the Powers' communication to the Porte so that the proposal would not have in Ottomans eyes the appearance of giving any privilege to the Christians which might be "invidious" to Moslem feelings. Grey even demanded that the Ottoman acceptance of the proposals be conditional upon the success of the Powers to secure its European provinces peacefully. Moreover, if the Porte made the reform "effective" the Powers would guarantee the Ottoman provinces in Europe.¹

But the favourable British line towards the Porte was soon to be less so since the moderate elements in Ghazi Moukhtar's Government - Kiamil and Gabriel Effendi - were overruled as a result of the increased enthusiasm for war propagated by the CUP. Lowther argued that in such a situation Kiamil's advent to power was not advisable as he would not be able to introduce immediate reform. This "foolish" behaviour on the part of the CUP made it difficult for the Powers to continue with their proposals to achieve reform and peace.²

The growing danger to the liberal Cabinet on the part of the CUP was so great that Nicolson maintained that:

The great question now is to my mind as to who will get the upper hand in Constantinople - the Moderate party or the fanatical and extreme party? I think that the former would assist us in every way in the measures to preserve the peace, but I am afraid that the latter party is gaining ground daily and that they may sweep away all elements which are of a pacific and moderate character. The danger point, therefore, in my opinion, lies just as much at Constantinople as at Sofia.³

Montenegro's aggression against the Ottoman Empire on 8 October was

¹Grey to Bertie, 6.10.12, tel. no. 508. BD.IX.1, no. 780. Same to same, 6.10.12 tel. no. 510. Urgent, ibid., no. 781. Grey to Lowther, 7.10.12, tel. no. 726. same to same, 6.10.12. tel. no. 511. ibid. no. 782.

²Lowther to Grey, 6.10.12, tel. no. 432. Minute by Vansittart, 7.10. BD. ibid., no. 785. Same to same, 6.10.12, tel. no. 436. FO/371/1500. Grey to Lowther, 5.10.12, no. 474. BD., ibid., no. 779.

³Nicolson to Granville, 8.10.12. Pte. NP, 359. Nicolson to Buchanan, 8.10.12. Pte., ibid.

regarded by Vansittart as a "cat's paw" to force hostilities before the Powers' diplomatic action gathered momentum. The Foreign Office rejected Berchtold's suggestion for pressing the Porte to agree to European supervision of the fulfillment of the reforms. Nicolson stated that this was not the time to press new demands on the Porte and that it should be offered some guarantee for the "peaceful possession" of the European provinces.¹ On 10 October Bax-Ironside reported that the Balkan States were in an uncompromising mood, now demanding that the Porte pay for their mobilization. Moreover, they intended to present an ultimatum to the Porte on the 15th, then declare war within twenty-four hours. "This makes it clear" Grey stated, "that nothing short of a determination by the Great Powers to coerce the Balkan States and Turkey by force would secure the peace".²

As far as the Porte was concerned the British Government declined to participate in coercion of this kind. Grey did not expect the Porte to accept that the Powers carry out the reforms in face of "popular" effervescence in the Ottoman Empire and the "violent" opposition of the CUP. Lowther reported that Ghazi Moukhtar's Government was "very weak" and could not continue in office if at this stage forced to execute reforms.³

But to Grey's surprise Sazonov did not press Britain for an anti-Ottoman line and thus saved him from having to face the dilemma which was in Nicolson's mind:

We shall have before long to make up our minds whether we will take up the Balkan cause in cooperation with Russia, and risk offending our Moslem opinion and Turkey: or whether to placate the latter we shall imperil the Triple Entente and probably break it.

Grey denied the existence of such a dilemma since Sazonov was not using the Balkan question as a touchstone for the continuation of the Entente.⁴

¹Lowther to Grey, 8.10.12, tel. no. 442. Urgent. BD.IX.ii, no. 1. Cartwright to Grey, 8.10.12, tel. no. 98, conf. minute. BD.IX. i. no. 797. Grey to Cartwright, 8.10.12, tel. no. 249, ibid., no. 799.

²Bax-Ironside to Grey, 10.10.12, no. 61. Secret. Minute by Grey, 11.10. BD. IX, ii, no. 12. Grey to Buchanan, 8.10.12. Pte., ibid., i. no. 810.

³Grey to Lowther, 11.10.12, tel. no. 770. Ibid., ii, no. 16. Lowther to Nicolson, 9.10.12. Pte. LP. Lowther to Grey, 8.10.12, no. 835.

⁴Buchanan to Grey, 9.10.12, no. 301, conf. minutes, 14.10. BDIX.i, no. 811. Nicolson to Lowther, 14.10.12. Pte. LP. Grey to Buchanan, 21.10.12. Pte., ibid., no. 813.

The Foreign Office was nevertheless careful that Moslem opinion in India should not become disaffected by any British attitude. Hence Nicolson's view that the Balkan Committee should be told to be "a little less prejudiced and a little more reasonable" in its criticism of the Porte. But it was Grey who burst into an anti-Balkan Committee tirade:

There are a number of people in this country who form Committees to indulge their own craving for emotional excitement and they can no more be restricted by hints and advice, than a man who is a slave to the excitement of drink can be influenced by hints to leave off/whiskey.¹

A few days before the war started both the Embassy and the Foreign Office were not very sanguine as to the military qualities of the Ottoman army. Lowther reported that there were no generals "worthy of name", the army was disorganized, and that many people liable for service paid the exemption tax. The financial situation might soon become "burning" as there was not a penny in the Treasury and the country still deeply divided, despite the critical situation between the CUP and their liberal opponents.

The Foreign Office knew that the Ottoman high command were "nervous" about their unpreparedness. Vansittart hardly took seriously the plan of Nazim Pasha, the Minister of War, for a direct attack on Sofia. He felt rather that the Ottoman army would retreat in order to maintain the Adrianople line.²

Vansittart rejected Sazonov's suggestion for mediation between the Porte and the Balkan States after the first decisive battle. He was working on the assumption that the Balkan States might win, only at the outset, while the Ottoman army would recover after the Asiatic troops arrived. At this point Vansittart suggested they start mediation to avoid

¹London All-India Moslem League to Foreign Office, 14.10.12. Minutes, 16.10. FO/371/1501/43301. See also Grey's reply to Duxton in the Commons on 10 October: "HMG have consistently encouraged the Turkish Government to proceed in its intention to introduce reforms into the administration of Turkey in Europe". Hansard. vol. XLII. cols. 495-6.

²Lowther to Nicolson, 9.10.12. Pte. LP. Lowther to Grey, 10.10.12, no. 848. Minute by Vansittart, 14.10. Same to same, 10.10.12, no. 843. Minute, 14.10. Same to same, 10.10.12, no. 842. Minute, 14.10. Lowther to Nicolson, 16.10.12. Pte. LP.

a diplomatic disaster following the expected defeat for the Porte.¹

Only at this late stage was the Porte ready to compromise with the Italians over Tripoli. On 15 October peace preliminaries were signed at Ouchy, but before this was known at the Foreign Office Grey had expressed great anxiety at the Porte's obstinacy in not making peace because of "small" points. He instructed Lowther to tell the Porte his view that this might be "disastrous" for the Ottoman Empire. In the Foreign Office considerable satisfaction was felt with the settlement since the prolongation of the war might have brought with it the closure of the Dardanelles once more. The final peace treaty was signed at Lausanne on 18 October and was followed on the 25th by Britain's recognition of Italian sovereignty in Tripoli and Cyrenaica. The "moving spirit" in the Porte's decision to stop the war was Kiamil, in face of strong opposition from the CUP. Lowther predicted that as a result of the peace England might be attacked since her name was associated with Kiamil's. On the other hand he concluded that the Ottoman Caliphate had suffered a "severe blow" and that the importance of Pan-Islam was exaggerated. Nicolson, unlike Vansittart, could not be convinced that this was the case.² When the peace with Italy was finally signed a full scale war had already begun between the Ottoman Empire and the Balkan States. Nicolson, however, did not consider the Tripoli war as the chief cause of the Balkan crisis:

.... To my mind [he wrote to Hardinge on 9 October] the primary cause of all that has happened is the secret alliance which Russia encouraged the 4 States to conclude.... The secondary cause was also Berchtold's proposals. The third is doubtless the difficulties in which Turkey finds herself in her internal administration; the Albanian insurrection and the war with Italy....³

¹ Buchanan to Grey, 15.10.12, tel. no. 370. Minute, 16.10.

² Dering to Grey, 15.10.12, tel. no. 135. Minute, 16.10. FO/371/1526. Grey to Lowther, 15.10.12, tel. no. 790. Grey to Imperiali, 25.10.12. BD. *ibid.*, no. 462. Lowther to Grey, 17.10.12, no. 873. Minutes, *ibid.*, no. 459. (Vansittart's minute: FO/371/1526). For the Treaty of Peace: Rodd to Grey, 2.12.12. no. 378, *ibid.*, no. 466.

³ Nicolson to Hardinge, 9.10.12. Pte. BD.IX. ii. no. 10. Buchanan had a different view: Buchanan to Nicolson, 17.10.12, Pte., *ibid.*, no. 43.

CHAPTER 5

Catastrophe and Change. British Policy during the Balkan Wars

(October 1912 - October 1913)

a. The Balkan Scene and the Future of the Asian Provinces

The beginning of hostilities between the Ottoman Empire and the Balkan States on 17 October saved Britain from experiencing the real - or, indeed, imaginary - repercussions of Pan-Islam.¹ The resentment felt in Russian public opinion after 1 October at Britain's attitude to the Balkan-Ottoman crisis, came too late to produce any new policy on Sazonov's part in order to call upon Britain to exert a stronger pressure on the Porte. It was however, significant that in fact Britain was never ready to sacrifice her Entente with Russia since this might produce a serious aggravation of the Pan-Islamic question:

It is quite true [Nicolson wrote to Townley] that our mussulmans are watching our attitude very carefully, but I feel quite sure that we should never be able to espouse the Turkish cause with that heartiness and sincerity which alone would be able to satisfy our own mussulmans. While if we separated ourselves from the majority of the European Powers and probably also from a very large section of public opinion here, and leant towards Turkey, we should certainly alienate Russia, and our mussulmans in India would then begin to reproach us for allowing Russia to prosecute her projects in Persia and elsewhere without being able or willing to restrain her. 2

This crucial absence of Russian pressure on Britain before the war started, had enabled the British Government to argue that it was determined to do "as any one else" to introduce "reform and good government" in both the European and Asiatic provinces of the Ottoman Empire. This was not too difficult a task as Hardinge reported that British policy so far had

1. Fitzmaurice regarded the "old terrors" of Pan-Islam as over, and the bogey exploded could no longer even frighten Ronaldshay or Curzon. Fitzmaurice to Tyrrell, 2.11.12. Pte., GP, 80, same to same, 18.12.12. Pte., ibid.
2. Nicolson to Townley (Tehran), 21.10.12. Pte., NP, 359. Nicolson to Goschen, 22.10.12 Pte., ibid., Nicolson to Buchanan, 22.10.12. Pte., BD. IX.ii. no.57.

not given any pretext to the Moslems for agitation.¹

This, however, was the view which prevailed in the Foreign Office before any decisive battle took place. The Foreign Office hoped, till the 24th, that no side would obtain a decisive victory over the other which might make any settlement very difficult. But the Foreign Office's line changed after the first Ottoman defeat at Komanova and Kirkilisse. Immediately after the news reached the Porte, Gabriel Effendi suggested to Lowther that England should take the initiative to bring about the intervention of the Powers since the Porte feared a general collapse of the Ottoman army. Grey's reply was that, if the Porte wished to avoid further defeats, it should unconditionally place the question of the settlement in the hands of the European Powers.²

On 28 October Vansittart still refused to believe that the Ottomans had lost the battle and could not understand the "strange" lukewarm attitude of the Moslems, in India, towards the War. But on that very day the Ottomans suffered another defeat when the Bulgarians occupied Drama, and cut communications between Constantinople and Salonica. Vansittart was now prepared to admit that the situation looked "very black" for the Ottomans. Later that day communications between Constantinople and Adrianople were also cut.³

In this desperate situation Kiamil was called upon to form a government. Both the Embassy and the Foreign Office regretted his appointment since he was identified with England and could involve her in difficulties, particularly as the Ottomans refused to believe that the days of 1856 and 1877 had passed. Vansittart rather hoped, from "a purely egoistic point of view", that Kiamil would not accept the Grand Vizierate. It was in any case too late to reverse

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1. Ibid. Hardinge to Nicolson, 29.10.12. Pte., NP, 360. Nevertheless the Viceroy suggested that a loan should be advanced to the Porte to complete the Baghdad irrigation works, in order to satisfy the Moslems. The Foreign Office rejected it as it was a departure from neutrality. Viceroy to India Office, 28.11.12. Minutes, 3.12. FO/371/1492/51653.
 2. Lowther to Grey, 24.10.12., tel. no. 524. Urgent, Secret and Conf. FO/371/1502. Grey to Lowther, 25.10.12., tel. no. 855.
 3. Paget to Grey, 27.10.12., tel. no. 43. Minute, 28.10. BD., ibid., no. 67. Lowther to Grey, 20.10.12., no. 882, Minute, 29.10. Bax-Ironside to Grey, 28.10.12., tel. no. 101, Minute, 28.10. Same to same, 28.10.12., tel. no. 103.

the deteriorating situation. Vansittart was right, for on the 28th the Ottoman army surrendered Lule Burgas, the main line of defence, while from Salonica the Consul-General had already reported a "general collapse" on the 26th.¹

On the 28th Grey informed the German Chargé that Britain would not object to the demands of the Balkan States if their victory were final. His one exception was that Constantinople should not be given to the Allies, but he still did not exclude the possibility of Ottoman success. Britain agreed to support the aims of the Balkan States if Russia and Austria would agree to make a declaration of their "disinterestedness". Nicolson had lost faith in the Ottoman army and regarded any projects for reforms as a waste of time. He made it clear that only in the event of the Ottomans emerging victorious could the partition of the European provinces be avoided. The British Government was not inhibited by any fears as to the attitude of the Moslems of India, since Hardinge reassured the Foreign Office that even if Albania and Macedonia might go he still could keep his Moslem subjects in hand.²

On 1 November it became quite clear that the situation was "utterly disastrous". Vansittart expressed the fear that the demoralised Ottoman army might not be able to check the rapidly advancing Bulgarians before the Chataldja lines. The Admiralty decided to send a ship to Besika Bay and the foreign Missions called upon the Porte to protect them from possible influx of the retreating hungry and fanatical troops.³

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1. Lowther to Grey, 27.10.12, tel. no. 535, Minute, 28.10. Same to same, 29.10.12, tel. no. 544. Same to same, 2.11.12, no. 928, Minute by Vansittart, 9.11. Bax-Ironside to Grey, 28.10.12, tel. no. 104, Minute, 28.10.
 2. Grey to Goschen, 28.10.12, no. 271, BD. ibid, no. 70. Minutes by Nicolson and Grey, 29.10.12, ibid, p.61. Ed. Note. Nicolson to Cartwright, 29.10.12. Pte. NP. 359. Nicolson to Goschen, 29.10.12. Pte., ibid, Nicolson to Lowther, 30.10.12. Pte. LP.
 3. Bax-Ironside to Grey, 31.10.12. tel. no. III. Minute by Vansittart, 1.11. Lowther to Grey, 1.11.12, tel. no. 561. Grey to Lowther, 1.11.12, tel. no. 908.

By 5 November the collapse of the Ottoman army was so total that Fitzmaurice envisaged the imminent occupation of Constantinople, or "Tzarigrad", as he called it now, by the Bulgarians, and the Court and Porte fleeing "bagless and baggeless [sic] (Gladstonese)" to the shores of Asia. He regarded the possibility of the fall of Constantinople as an historic moment which had not only undone the "drama" of 1453 but had also "set right" Article 23 of the Berlin Treaty and might yet redress Article 61 if widespread massacres occurred in the Armenian province.¹

The CUP and the Germans were, according to the Foreign Office and the Embassy, the chief villains responsible for the catastrophe. The British accepted Ghazi Moukhtar's criticism that the failure of Shevket's and von der Goltz's system of re-organisation was one of the major causes of the defeat. The British also accepted the Bulgarian argument that the defeat of the Ottoman Empire was a result of the Young Turk rule for the past four years.²

The danger of the Ottoman capital falling into the Bulgarians' hands forced the British Government to define its attitude. The Foreign Office was ready to confirm the end of Ottoman rule in Europe, except for Constantinople and its vilayet, as had been suggested by the Russians. The British rejected the idea of internationalising Constantinople and making it a free port as not "very practical" and suggested instead its "neutralisation". Regarding the Straits problem they were prepared to solve it on pro-Russian lines, as had been promised to Izvolsky in October 1908.³

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1. Fitzmaurice to Tyrrell, 5.11.12. Pte. GP, 80. Lowther to Grey, 4.11.12, tel. no. 579. Urgent and conf. BD, ibid, no. 120.
 2. Lowther to Nicolson, 31.10.12. Pte. LP. Lowther to Grey, 28.10.12, no. 914. Conf. Minute by Vansittart, 4.11. Goschen to Nicolson, 27.10.12. Pte. NP, 359. The Germans defended themselves on the ground that the Ottoman officers wasted their time on politics instead of training. Goschen to Nicolson, 2.11.12. Pte., ibid.
 3. Grey to Buchanan, 5.11.12, tel. no. 1176. Nicolson to Buchanan, 5.11.12. Pte. BD, ibid, no. 135. Grey to Lowther, 5.11.12, Pte. and Secret, tel. LP. Nicolson to Goschen, 5.11.12, Pte. NP, 359.

Though the British Government supported the claims of the victorious Balkan States, they did not seek concessions for themselves, although Kitchener, until recently pro-Ottoman, now saw the time ripe for pressing the Porte for a settlement consolidating British rule in Egypt. "Our position would be very much weaker if we were trying to get anything for ourselves," Grey replied, "and there would be a general scramble." Contrary to rumours in the press and at Constantinople, Britain had no intention of running the Khedive for the Caliphate. "I would rather stake my money," Nicolson commented, "on a young Arab Caliphate if the Sultan goes under."¹

Grey remained unmoved by Kiamil's desperate appeal to the British Government to support the Ottoman Empire on Pan-Islamic grounds, since Russia was supporting the Balkan States on Pan-Slavic grounds. Fitzmaurice tried to explain to the Grand Vizier that there was no truth in the Ottoman claim that Europe had declared a crusade against the Ottoman Empire. He also added that Moslems in Bulgaria and Crete remained unmolested. The most that Grey was ready to do was to express his personal sympathy to Kiamil for the difficulty in which he was placed. "England as the old friend of Turkey," Lowther argued, "will of course come in for the greatest share of odium for not having stirred a finger to help them. One can hardly expect them to realise we have other interests beyond Turkey." However, Lowther shared, unjustifiably, the odium more than Grey.²

Grey did not deny that the Foreign Office agreed with the British press that no change had occurred in the British attitude towards the

1. Kitchener to Grey, 3.11.12. Pte. BD., ibid, no. 113. Lowther to Grey, 4.11.12, no. 931, conf. encl. memo. by Fitzmaurice, conf. FO/371/504. Grey to Kitchener, 14.11.12. Pte., ibid, no. 204.
2. Lowther to Grey, 7.11.12. Pte. and conf. GP. 80. Same to same, 7.11.12, Pte. and conf. encl. Kiamil's tel., ibid. Same to same, 11.11.12. Pte., ibid. Grey to Lowther, 12.11.12. Pte., ibid, same to same, 13.11.12. Pte. Lowther to Nicolson, 7.11.12. Pte. LP. B. Lewis, BSOAS (1960), p.147, quoted in: F. Ahmad, The Young Turks, p.128.

the Porte as a result of the CUP's defeat the previous July:

... it must be borne in mind that the effect upon public opinion here of the long years of Abdul Hamid's iniquities was inevitable; then came a wave of sympathy with the hopes of the Young Turk revolution, followed by reaction to disgust when the CUP rule turned out badly; the flicker of hope that we felt when the CUP fell could hardly counteract this and no doubt the general feeling is that the Turks are reaping what they have sown. 1

Yet there was still a strong fear in the Foreign Office and the Embassy that the CUP might return to power, supported by Germany and Austria and by the fact that the "weak" Kiamil Government could not save the Ottoman Empire. The CUP could march on the capital with Shevket as dictator, and would then institute a reign of terror with the intention of establishing a republic on Portuguese or Chinese lines, as happened in April 1909. Vansittart did not think this was very practical in view of the threat of the Bulgarian army on Chataldja, but justified the arrests which had been made amongst the CUP's members as "very wise". Nicolson cited the CUP's promise to sink all differences facing the "common foe". He hoped that Kiamil's Government would adopt "very serious" measures against the CUP's leaders - "a most malicious lot" - who had done "incalculable" harm to the Ottoman cause.²

But though the unfriendly attitude of the British Government towards the Young Turks could be easily explained away as a result of their total failure to rule the country, the fact was that the line taken by the Foreign Office towards Kiamil's Government was practically the same. The reason was that the Entente with Russia was more important for Britain, as Nicolson stated, than the effect of the possible fall of Constantinople upon the Moslem subjects of the British Empire: "... were these understandings [with Russia and France] to be in any way weakened we should find ourselves in

1. Grey to Lowther, 15.11.12, no. 523. Minute by Grey, FO/371/1506.

2. Lowther to Grey, 11.11.12, tel. no. 612. Minutes, 12.11. Nicolson to Lowther, 13.11.12. Pte. LP. Lowther to Grey, 26.11.12, no. 996. Minute by Vansittart, 2.12. Same to same, 10.12.12, no. 1055, Minute by Vansittart, 16.12.

a most awkward and uncomfortable international position". The British Government also sheltered behind British public opinion which "strongly" favoured the Balkan States. Britain found it easier to place her faith in the hope that Kiamil and King Ferdinand would arrange an armistice, and the latter would find it unnecessary to enter Constantinople. "It would be an enormous relief to me," Nicolson wrote to Goschen, "if it could possibly be averted."¹

While the danger of the Bulgarian occupation of Constantinople was still imminent, the crushing defeat the Ottomans had suffered called for further explanations. Lowther considered constitutional government which had weakened the Caliphate as the chief cause for the catastrophe. Tyrrell, his Military Attaché, found the answer in the failure of the Ottoman army. He maintained that there was no esprit de corps; the change in the education of the officer proved to be a failure; the application of the German military system was like "putting new wine into old bottles"; politics had undoubtedly "sapped" the morale of both army and nation; the result was that the Ottoman army fought with less enthusiasm now than in the "more unsophisticated days". Tyrrell's criticism, which received the support of Professor Vambéry was accepted by the Foreign Office.²

Whatever might have been the causes of the Ottoman defeat, the British Government welcomed the failure of the Bulgarians to break through the Chataldja lines, and hoped that they would receive another check which might help the cause of peace. On the other hand Nicolson wrote to Townley that:

One must naturally remember that the Turk is in reality an intruder, and that his hold upon the Caliphate was one of force and if this force is shown to be wanting naturally all its prestige and influence would disappear.

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1. Ibid, Nicolson to Bax-Ironside, 12.11.12. Pte. BD., ibid, no. 184. Nicolson to Goschen, 13.11.12. Pte. NP, 359.
 2. Lowther to Nicolson, 14.11.12. Pte. Lowther to Grey, 12.11.12, no. 955. Tyrrell to Lowther, 9.11.12, no. 88. Minute by Nicolson, 18.11. Vambéry firmly believed before the war that the Ottoman would be the winner. Grant-Duff (Budapest) to Grey, 19.11.12, no. 40. (Vambéry's penetrating analysis in the "Pester Lloyd", 17.11).

Nicolson was less condemnatory to Hardinge:

I am not at all sure that if the Turkish Government pull themselves together and are able to maintain their hold over their Asiatic dominions, that they will not eventually be in a better and stronger position than when they had such turbulent provinces to manage such as Macedonia and Albania. 1

Whilst the Foreign Office was ready to support Russia and the Balkan States against the Ottoman Empire, they dreaded giving any assistance to them in the rivalry between Austria and Serbia, for fear that this might make a general war inevitable. The sacrifice of the Ottoman Empire to the Balkan States was not an expensive one for Britain since the Ottoman defeat had been "very calmly" received throughout the Moslem world, demanding from Britain only "a more or less academic and benevolent sympathy" for the Slav cause.²

The Foreign Office, however, rejected any suggestion of weakening Ottoman rule in Asia. Lowther's prediction as to the possibility of a "movement of emancipation" in parts of Asia Minor and Syria, or Fitzmaurice's prophecy that Arabia might be "semi-automatically" detached and link up with Cairo - found no echo in London, where Grey approved Cumberbatch's language to "leading Moslems" from Beirut that an extension of Egyptian rule to Syria was "neither practicable nor desirable".³

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1. Lowther to Grey, 18.11.12, tel. no. 647. Minute by Vansittart, 19.11. Nicolson to Townley, 19.11.12. Pte. NP, 360. Nicolson to Hardinge, 21.11.12. Pte. ibid, Hardinge agreed with Nicolson: Hardinge to Nicolson, 19.12.12. Pte. NP, 361.
 2. Cartwright to Nicolson, 22.11.12. Pte. BD. ibid, no. 256. Nicolson to Townley, 19.11.12. Pte., op. cit., Nicolson to Hardinge, 21.11.12. Pte., op. cit., Nicolson to Buchanan, 19.11.12. Pte. ibid, no. 238. Chirol to Nicolson, 18.12.12. Pte. NP, 360.
 3. Lowther to Nicolson, 20.11.12. Pte. LP. Fitzmaurice to Tyrrell, 5.11.12. Pte. op. cit., Lowther to Grey, 21.11.12, no. 984. Cumberbatch to Lowther 14.11.12, no. 76, conf., Minute by Grey, 4.12., FO/371/1507. Syria was considered at the Foreign Office as part of "greater Arabia". Bertie to Grey, 24.12.12, no. 539, conf. Minute by Tilley, 31.12., FO/371/1522.

The end of Ottoman rule in Europe was quite another matter and Britain opposed Berchtold's suggestion that the Treaty of San Stefano be the basis of the peace preliminaries. "The mention of San Stefano did rather startle and alarm" him, Nicolson wrote to Cartwright, since this would mean the return of certain portions of Macedonia, including Salonica, to the Porte, a step unthinkable to Britain since she had agreed to the Bulgarian demand for Adrianople.¹

Nicolson was cynical about the fate of the Ottoman Empire when he had rejected a return to San Stefano. But so was Lowther. When the Ottomans reminded Lowther that England had deserted them in time of trouble and why out of all bad governments in Europe it was the Ottoman, and not the Russian which had to go, he commented:

They [the Ottomans] cannot understand that in the eyes of just Europe weakness is the greatest crime and that European policy is not dictated by sentiment but by individual necessities and ambitions. 2

This was why Lowther believed that the Powers would give the Porte little peace in its Asiatic provinces, although it had behaved "admirably" in the Armenian provinces. Britain, at least, did not intend to indulge in intrigue in the Asiatic provinces. She viewed, however, with suspicion the encouragement given by Germany to the Porte to maintain itself as an important political and economic factor. This could mean that the Porte would be allowed to retain a "considerable" part of her possession in Europe, and Russian military intervention would inevitably result.³

Indeed, since 17 November, when the Bulgarians had been checked before the Chataldja lines, the Ottoman army had steadily improved its fighting qualities. Now, the Foreign Office was worried not by King Ferdinand's

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1. Nicolson to Cartwright, 26.11.12, Pte. NP, 360. Cartwright to Grey, 24.11.12., tel. no. 158. Minute by Nicolson, 25.11, BD. ibid, no. 262
 2. Lowther to Nicolson, 28.11.12, Pte. LP.
 3. Ibid. Nicolson to Buchanan, 3.12.12, Pte., BD., ibid, no. 322. Nicolson to Goschen, 3.12.12. Pte. NP, 360. Nicolson to Lowther, 27.11.12, Pte., LP., see p. .

success but by that of the Porte. Vansittart was apprehensive that their recent achievement might induce increased rigidity in the Ottomans in the coming peace negotiations. The Foreign Office was glad that the Bulgarians were ready to negotiate for an armistice, but disagreed with their "excessive" demands.¹

The pro-Balkan attitude of the British Government was publicly exemplified by Asquith's Guildhall speech, on 10 November, where he said that the "victors were not to be robbed of the fruits of which cost them so dear". He, moreover, could not resist expressing his admiration for the Balkan States: "... even the campaign of Austerlitz did not produce changes so sudden, and so startling and overwhelmingly complete as those which during the last months have been wrought by the Balkan Confederacy".²

However, even more extreme was Churchill's speech to the Eighty Club on 30 November. In this speech Churchill paid tribute to "that great man" Gladstone who predicted the course of events "in extraordinary precision and detail". His speech was made a subject of a Parliamentary Question in which the Government was asked if it supported Churchill's assertion that Britain's policy meant to promote the happiness of the Bulgarian and Hellenic peoples, while exhibiting "complete indifference" to the happiness of the "Turks". Asquith tried to save Churchill's face and refused to admit that the speech was inopportune pending the London peace conference.³

The fact was that Britain, while agreeing that serious acts of violence had been committed against the Moslem population during the recent campaign, refused to intervene. Vansittart could only comment that:

1. Lowther to Grey, 7.12.12, no. 1043. Tyrrell to Lowther, 2.12.12, no. 89. Minute, 13.12, FO/371/1508. Nicolson to Bax-Ironside, 26.11.12, Pte., BD., ibid, no. 286. Bax-Ironside to Grey, 19.11.12, tel. no. 162, conf. Minutes, FO/371/1514. Lowther to Grey, 19.11.12, tel. no. 656, BD., ibid, no. 230. (Minute by Vansittart, 20.11, FO/371/1514.)
2. The Times, 11.11.12, p.10.
3. Parliamentary Questions by Sir J.D. Rees, 5.12.12; 11.12.12, Hansard, vol. XLIV, col. 2478, vol. XLV, cols. 449-50. Lowther rejected Churchill's view: Lowther to Nicolson, 4.12.12, Pte., LP. Annual Report for 1912, pp.7-8 in: Lowther to Grey, 17.4.13, no. 315.

The conduct of the Allies, from the moment when they obtained the upper hand, has been just as bad as anything the Turks have ever done ... one cannot help regretting that nothing has been done to check them or to let Europe know the real [sic] of these people on whom a deal of sympathy has been wasted. 1

But the Balkan States had already obtained Britain's support not only for their claims on the mainland but also for the Greek claims to the Aegean Islands.²

Meanwhile, Fitzmaurice was asked by Kiamil to mediate between the Porte and the Balkan States. Fitzmaurice advised the Porte to start immediate and direct negotiations with the Balkan States warning them against following the CUP's advice to continue the fighting. His appeal to the Ottoman statesmen proved successful, although the Foreign Office was unaware of it until its conclusion. In a prophetic vision he foresaw the "aggressive" tendencies of the Balkan States turning against Austria after their ambition in the Ottoman provinces had been fulfilled: "... Turkey, no longer worried by a Macedonian question, and Albanian question and Salonica Jacobinism, nor obliged to keep up and pay for a standing force of close on 300,000 men in the European provinces, would be stronger financially and organically". Privately he was even more outspoken as to the future of the Ottoman Empire. He warned that an Austrian attack on Serbia might bring the CUP back to power: "When the CUP returns, the end of Turkey, already amputated in Africa and Europe, may be in sight ... if the Turks do not settle up quietly and the Kurdish, Arab and Armenian questions come on the tapis, Russia may be obliged to intervene in Kurdistan ..." Fitzmaurice no doubt expressed the general attitude of both the British Government and public opinion when he congratulated the Balkan States for having "cleared up a mess which defeated the ingenuity of

1. Lowther to Grey, 8.12.12, tel. Minutes by Nicolson and Grey, 9.12, ibid, 1507/52380. Lowther to Grey, 29.11.12, no. 1009. Minute by Vansittart, 6.12. Fitzmaurice warned against an anti-Balkan atrocity campaign as a Salonica Jews and Austrian manoeuvre to save the town from Greek rule. Fitzmaurice to Tyrrell, 18.12.12, Pte., GP, 80.
2. Goschen to Grey, 22.11.12, tel. no. 162, BD., ibid, no. 251 (Minute by Vansittart, 23.11, FO/371/1515. Admiralty to F.O., 12.12.12. Secret, FO/371/1508/53240. Lowther to Grey, 12.11.12, tel. no. 622. Minutes, FO/371/1514. Grey to Cartwright, 18.12.12, no. 105. Secret.BD, ibid, no.394.

of European diplomacy". But Fitzmaurice had another task to fulfill: to explode the myth of the Anglophil Kiamil. It started, he said, with the late King congratulating the Sultan in the autumn 1908, which had left him "aghast" since he foresaw that "it was worse for us that the Kruger telegram as it would dog us for years in Turkish internal politics as indeed it has done".¹

Although the armistice was signed on 3 December, peace was still a long way off. Both the Foreign Office and the Embassy accused the Central Powers of "stoking up" the Porte. The terms suggested by the Porte were regarded by Vansittart as "ridiculous" and could only prove "an aggravating waste of time". Lowther, Fitzmaurice and the French and Russian Ambassadors intimated to the Porte the "expediency" of accepting the fait accompli and of being "reasonable and moderate". The Foreign Office was less worried by the Porte's uncompromising attitude, since this might be modified. No direct British intervention was planned for the present but it was suggested by Grey that this should be reserved for a possible deadlock in negotiations in the coming London conference.²

The crux of the situation proved to be Adrianople, as the Ottomans claimed that its retention was a strategic necessity. Parker assumed that the negotiations would reach an impasse and the war would be renewed. In that case he dreaded the complete collapse of the Ottoman Empire as a result of possible outbreaks in the Asiatic provinces which might lead to the active intervention of Russia in Armenia, France in Syria and Germany in Anatolia. Grey, however, refused to press the Porte to yield to the terms of the victorious Balkan States, since London was chosen as the place for peace

1. Fitzmaurice to Tyrrell, 18.12.12, Pte., op. cit.

2. Lowther to Grey, 11.12.12, tel. no. 715, conf. Minutes, 12.12. BD., ibid., no. 369.

negotiations and he ought to be the partisan of neither side.¹

Since all the Powers agreed that the Porte should surrender Adrianople, Grey consented to a joint advice to the Porte on the ground that the financial straits of the country had made it imperative for her to make peace, otherwise the Powers might be provoked to interfere to an extent which might considerably impair the sovereignty of Constantinople. Grey, moreover, agreed with Russia that if hostilities recommenced she could no longer maintain her neutrality. He also agreed with the Austrians that if Adrianople were retained by the Porte and the war continued, the integrity of the Armenian and Syrian Vilayets might be in danger.² Lowther also thought that the end of the Ottoman rule in Europe as such would be a "great incentive to other discontented people".³

The beginning of 1913 still brought with it no change in the impasse over the peace negotiations. While the Foreign Office fully supported the Balkan Allies, Lowther did not hesitate to call their peace terms "very severe" and "preposterous". He warned the Foreign Office that by supporting the "very severe" terms of the Allies Britain would be "instrumental" in restoring the CUP to power. He also was very much against the Foreign Office's proposal to hand over Lemnos and Mitylene to Greece: "It would be akin to our allowing France to occupy the Isle of Wight or the Isle of Man." As long as Kiamil's Government remained in office, he was less concerned than the Foreign Office about possible trouble in Asia Minor unless Russia intervened. Lowther by no means confined himself to the question of the peace negotiations. He launched a sharp criticism on both the attitude of the Foreign Office and

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1. Goschen to Grey, 14.12.12, tel. no. 177, conf. Grey to Bax-Ironside, 18.12.12, no. 46, ibid, no. 396. Lowther to Grey, 18.12.12, tel. no. 727. Minute by Parker, 19.12, ibid, no. 393. Same to same, 19.12.12, tel. no. 728. Same to same, 20.12.12, no. 1090, ibid, no. 402.
 2. Lowther to Grey, 22.12.12, tel. no. 731. Minute by Grey, 23.12, same to same, 23.12.12, tel. no. 732. Minute by Grey, 24.12, BD., ibid, no. 411. Grey to Lowther, 30.12.12, tel. no. 1127, ibid, no. 421.
 3. Lowther to Nicolson, 4.12.12, Pte., op. cit.

that of the British press towards the Porte over the massacre of Moslems by the Allies:

Is not the attitude of the English press somewhat unfortunate? We have hitherto had a certain reputation for fairness and for putting both sides of the case before the public. Although we know that in this case Bulgars and Greeks have been worse offenders than Turks in the way of massacres, not a word is said in our press against them. Of course this makes my position now and in the future impossible, but will it not also have a very bad effect in India, where we must depend to a great extent on Moslem opinion? I do not know. The subject is too big for me, but so it strikes me, and as an impartial person who is by no means wedded to the Turk, it is painful to me to see this unfair bias. I hope we may get our reward somewhere for this iniquity, but at present I don't see where ... Apparently we have washed our hands of Turkey. Even English ships decline to come here and all we ask are favours and give nothing in return. The Germans continue to pour gold into the coffers of the different interested Ministries and get concessions. We ask for them for our "beaux yeux" for which we give nothing in return, and are surprised that our requests are not favourably met. 1

Fitzmaurice, however, was nearer to the Foreign Office's view. He suggested that the Powers should put pressure upon the Porte to make concessions as with the case of Akaba (1906). Contrary to Lowther he rejected any consideration of its effect on Moslem feeling in India as "tiresome" and "sectarian" and described the atrocities against Moslems as "fiction", as was the case in Tripoli. But he had his own fears: if the Porte did not hurry up it might be faced both with "big* Arab" and Armenian questions, as well as the prospect of "the international shylocks" taking control of her finances.²

In face of the uncompromising attitude of the Porte on the Adrianople question the French suggested a démarche collective at Constantinople, supported by a naval demonstration. The Russians supported the suggestion, the Germans opposed it. Grey felt that two ships should be sent to Besika Bay to support the démarche collective.³ But Nicolson was unenthusiastic:

1. Lowther to Nicolson, 1.1.13, Pte., LP. Lowther, however, rejected the "exaggerated" version of the "Jeune Turc" concerning the massacres. Lowther to Grey, 13.2.13, no. 120.
2. Fitzmaurice to Tyrrell, 6.1.13, Pte., GP., 80. * Fitzmaurice's italics.
3. Grey to Cartwright, 4.1.13, no. 3, BD.IX,ii, no. 451. Grey to Lowther, 6.1.13, tel. no. 14, ibid, no. 456.

Unless a very large naval force indeed is despatched ... the vessels would be unable to land any men in any number to quench any possible rising and we might witness again what took place at Alexandria in the early eighties. Naval demonstrations, and even the threat of them, used to have a very calming effect upon the late Sultan, but I do not know if they would be equally efficacious in the present instance.

He regretted the Bulgarians' refusal to be satisfied with the demilitarisation of Adrianople, and admitted to Goschen that the Powers' policy was "a peculiarly arbitrary and severe proceeding" in view of their formal promise before the War had started that no matter what might be its result the status quo would be maintained. Nonetheless, he was forced to accept that in the interest of European peace, the Porte had to be pressed to abandon everything.¹ Meanwhile the Powers decided to send a few ships to defend their nationals and interests, hoping that this might also help the démarche.²

As the Porte continued to insist on keeping Adrianople, the Foreign Office told them that they might face a "complete shipwreck" if the war was renewed. It was also hoped in the Foreign Office that Adrianople would soon fall. The Foreign Office was not impressed by the Porte's argument, already mentioned by Lowther, that the pressure might lead to the overthrow of the present Government and cause an outbreak at Constantinople.³

Though the Foreign Office could take pride in keeping the Concert alive to settle this recent crisis, Lowther took a more realistic view of the situation when he commented: "... we have successfully thrown Turkey into the arms of the Triple Alliance, for they have been very mild in their advice and prodigious [sic] of what Turkey 'might do' if they continued the war". But he did

1. Nicolson to Cartwright, 7.1.13, Pte., NP., 362. Nicolson to Goschen, 7.1.13, Pte., ibid, Nicolson to Hardinge, 9.1.13, Pte., ibid. Nicolson to Lowther, 8.1.13, Pte., LP. Grey to Cartwright, 7.1.13, no. 8, BD., ibid, no. 465. Grey to Rodd, 9.1.13, tel. no. 13, ibid, no. 474.
2. Lowther to Grey, 7.1.13, tel. no. 10. Minute, 7.1, FO/371/1757. Same to same, 7.1.13, tel. no. II. Minute, 8.1. Grey to Lowther, 7.1.13, tel. no. 21. Grey to Bertie, 8.1.13, no. 25, ibid, no. 470.
3. Nicolson to Hardinge, 9.1.13, Pte., op. cit. Lowther to Grey, 9.1.13, tel. no. 16. Minute by Vansittart, 10.1. Grey to Lowther, 10.1.13, no. 12, ibid, no. 490.

not delude himself that he could persuade the Foreign Office to take a more balanced attitude towards the Porte. In the Foreign Office, indeed, the prevailing opinion was that dividing the Powers over the Eastern question was an ineffective danger, and no more than an Ottoman intrigue.¹

What really worried the Foreign Office was the danger that in the event of the resumption of hostilities, Russia might intervene, followed by Austrian action against Servia. Lowther was warned not to support Kiamil and the moderates against the CUP even if this might mean working against peaceful solution between the Allies and the Porte.² The Foreign Office gave little credence to Lowther's report that there was a cleavage in local politics, since November, between the CUP and the Triple Alliance on one hand and the "moderates" and the Entente on the other. The Ambassador was again warned by the Foreign Office not to make any suggestion, as he had made to Kiamil with regard to Adrianople which would involve the Allies in compromising their claims.³

Still, Britain rejected the Allies' demand for compensation from the Porte. Such a demand would prevent the Porte from putting its finances on a sound basis and might "cripple" its administration. Britain now wished for the Ottoman Empire to consolidate and strengthen itself as an Asiatic power, though she admitted that the Porte might face troubles mainly in the Armenian provinces. Nicolson did see a danger to Ottoman rule in Asia as a result of a military collapse but recalled that the Arabs or Kurds had "no organisation or cohesion". The possible liquidation of Ottoman rule in Asia became ominous:

1. Grey to Lowther, 10.1.13, tel. no. 25, BD., ibid, no. 482. Lowther to Nicolson, 9.1.13. Minute by Vansittart, 10.1, in: Lowther to Grey, 9.1.13, tel. no. 16, op. cit.
2. Nicolson to Goschen, 14.1.13, Pte., NP, 362. Lowther to Grey, 16.1.13, tel. no. 23, conf. Minutes by Grey and Nicolson, ibid, nos. 513, 515.
3. Same to same, 17.1.13, tel. no. 28, Conf. ibid, no. 521. (Minutes, 18.1, FO/371/1757), Grey to Lowther, 19.1.13, tel. no. 43, ibid, no. 529.

"... we shall then come face to face with facts which to my mind will be still more formidable and difficult than those with which we are at present confronted in Europe".¹ In any case Nicolson admitted that the "complete" failure of the Constitutional systems in both the Ottoman Empire and Persia had taught Britain an important lesson: not to apply "these products of advanced western civilisation" to oriental countries.²

With this background one could perhaps understand the complete disfavour with which Kiamil was regarded in the Foreign Office, in contrast to the great favour with which he had been treated during his period of office in the aftermath of the 1908 Revolution. Lowther, following Fitzmaurice, felt that Britain would have to share the "odium of the inglorious peace" as a result of Ottoman public disillusionment with Kiamil - "the friend of England".³

Only three days before the coup d'état Lowther reported that though Kiamil maintained an attitude of 'non possumus' to the outside world, he had in fact been secretly determined to make peace even by sacrificing Adrianople and the Islands. Less than twenty-four hours before the coup d'état took place Lowther informed London that the Cabinet had decided for peace and for a favourable reply to the Powers' Note concerning Adrianople, and the Islands. Nicolson was still apprehensive lest the reply might imply not a complete cession of Adrianople but a compromise.⁴

Kiamil, however, was quite determined to stop the war now going disastrously for the Ottomans. But he was careful not to take the full

1. Nicolson to Lowther, 4.2.13, Pte., LP. Nicolson to Cartwright, 4.2.13., Pte., Nicolson to Goschen, 21.1.13, Pte., NP, 362. Nicolson to Cartwright, 21.1.13, Pte., ibid. Nicolson to Bax-Ironside, 22.1.13, Pte., ibid. Grey to Bertie, 21.1.13, tel. no. 30, BD., ibid., no. 534.
2. Nicolson to Buchanan, 14.1.13., Pte., NP., 362.
3. Lowther to Nicolson, 21.1.13, Pte., LP. Fitzmaurice to Tyrrell, 18.12.12, Pte., op. cit.
4. Lowther to Grey, 20.1.13, tel. no. 34, conf. FO/371/1758. Lowther to Nicolson, 21.1.13, Pte., op. cit. Lowther to Grey, 23.1.13, tel. no. 38. Minutes, BD., ibid., no. 544.

responsibility. He therefore summoned a Grand Council comprising the leading figures of the country, which supported him on the need to reach peace. The CUP now saw themselves provided with an excellent opportunity to launch their coup d'état which they had been planning for some time. Thus on 23 January, at 3.0 p.m., while the Cabinet was drafting its conciliatory reply to the Powers' Note, a body of about forty or sixty people, "mostly, apparently, of the hooligan class" (Lowther) appeared at the entrance of the Sublime Porte. Led by Enver and Jemal, and joined later by Talaat, waving liberty banners and Moslem emblems they cried, "Death to the traitors!" "Death to Kiamil Pasha!" The "conspirators" had beforehand skilfully cut the telephone communications and arranged for pro-CUP Oushak battalion to guard the Porte, while the anti-CUP battalion had been sent away to military exercises. They faced the resistance of Kiamil's aide-de-camp, but overcame and killed him, as well as General Nazim Pasha, the Minister of War and his aide-de-camp. Enver forced Kiamil to resign at gunpoint, but, he claimed, to speak at the behest of the entire army and of all the people. That evening, at 8.0 p.m., Shevket, the CUP's nominee, was appointed Grand Vizier.

Lowther claimed that he had on the 16th already foreseen possible return to power of the "committee Jacobins", and their becoming active on "carbonary" lines, because of Kiamil's readiness to give up Adrianople, but even he had to admit that the CUP's reappearance was "almost seismic".¹ Vansittart expressed the feeling of the Foreign Office when he commented on the coup d'état: "It is deplorable ... The leading members of the CUP ought to have been adequately dealt with in advance." The Foreign Office was also convinced that the CUP would now renew the war. Lowther, who had already warned the Foreign Office against Wangenheim's policy before the coup now reported that the new CUP

1. Lowther to Grey, 24.1.13, no. 62, conf. FO/371/1788. Same to same, 28.1.13, no. 69. Ahmad, The Young Turks, passim.

Cabinet had a "distinct" German character.¹

But the Foreign Office was much preoccupied with the possibility, raised by Lowther, of a counter-revolution backed by the troops of Chatakdja, who were indignant at the assassination during the coup of Nazim Pasha, the Minister of War. Vansittart could not believe that a counter-coup was feasible since the CUP were "unfortunately" the only organised body in the country. Nicolson, however, greatly exaggerated this possibility and believed that the continued existence of the Shevket Cabinet was "exceedingly doubtful" and a counter-coup was "quite possible".²

At Constantinople, meanwhile, Tyrrell, the Military Attache, took a more realistic view of the situation. Three days after the coup he met Enver whom he described as the "central figure" of the regime, "at least to the public eye", a somewhat more favourable view than that of Goschen who had described Enver as "that little bird of ill omen". Tyrrell saw Enver as "a modest young man and a zealous officer" who had become prominent in the CUP mainly after he had returned from Tripoli, but he admitted that the coup had been successful because of the assistance of Izzet Pasha, the Chief of Staff. Lowther added one ominous explanation of the coup when he reported that before it took place its makers had been in close contact with the Triple Alliance Embassies.³

Now, after the coup became an accomplished fact, both the Embassy and the Foreign Office did not conceal their strong antipathy to the Young Turks. Both advised against the German suggestion to advance financial aid to the new Government, as long as they maintained their "jingo" attitude towards a

1. Same to same, 23.1.13, tel. no. 39, ibid, no. 545. (Minutes, 24.1, FO/371/1788.) Same to same, 23.1.13, tel. no. 40. Minutes, 24.1, ibid, no. 547. Same to same, 24.1.13, tel. no. 42, ibid, no. 550. Lowther to Nicolson, 21.1.13, Pte., op. cit.
2. Lowther to Grey, 27.1.13, tel. no. 51. Minute 28.1. Nicolson to Goschen, 28.1.13, Pte., NP. 362. Nicolson to Buchanan, 28.1.13, Pte., ibid.
3. Tyrrell to Lowther, 26.1.13, no. 3, in: Lowther to Grey, 26.1.13, no. 65. Same to same, 18.1.13, no. 69.

European settlement. Lowther no more criticised the Foreign Office for its unfairness as he had done during the late Government. He now forecast that the CUP, having formed the National Defence Committee on the lines of the French Revolutionaries in 1793 and the "Communists" in 1870, would now launch the "Terreur".¹ This was received in the Foreign Office as "the most depressing report which we have yet received".²

But while criticism of the CUP was not a new feature in Lowther's attitude, the confidence with which he reported on the Triple Alliance - CUP collusion was new indeed. He warned that Wangenheim, who had long before been described by Lowther as a follower of Marschall's policy, would not fail to profit from the new situation in which the Entente Powers had such a "decided" anti-Ottoman policy. This did not result from the coup d'état itself, Lowther argued, but rather from the support given to the Balkan States by the Entente after their decisive victory of the previous November. Indeed, British support for Russia in the Balkans was too basic a principle for the Foreign Office, where the Triple Entente was regarded with the highest importance for preserving the European peace. In these matters of "general policy" the Ambassador had "no say", as Lowther admitted to Wangenheim.³

This did not mean that the Triple Entente was not divided on the question of the spheres of influence. Britain had to calm down the Germans, who suspected an agreement between the Entente Powers for the division of the Ottoman provinces in Asia into "Arabian, Armenian and Syrian spheres of interests". But Grey

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1. According to Lowther the Young Turks had taken the French Revolution as their pattern. Annual Report for Turkey, 1912, in: Lowther to Grey, 17.4.13, no. 315, p.9.
 2. Lowther to Grey, 25.1.13, tel. no. 43, ibid., no. 557, Same to same, 5.2.13, no. 92. Conf. Minute by Norman, 12.2. Same to same, 13.2.13, tel. no. 87, Minute by Parker. On the realisation of his forecast see same to same, 15.5.13, no. 210, conf. FO/371/1783.
 3. Same to same, 15.1.13, no. 35. Nicolson to Hardinge, 9.1.13, Pte., op. cit. Nicolson to Lowther, 19.2.13, Pte., LP. Lowther to Nicolson, 13.2.13, Pte., ibid. Nicolson to Cartwright, 19.2.13, Pte., BD., ibid., no. 632.

rejected an Italian proposal to guarantee the integrity of the remaining possessions of the Ottoman Empire, in view of the French agitation about Syria since it might be interpreted as directed either against Germany or Russia.¹ He impressed upon France and Russia the need to avoid any agitation. But while the Foreign Office did not deny Russia's interest in Armenia, there was little enthusiasm for France's clamour for Syria:

The French must not make another Morocco of Asia Minor. Germany has been shut out of the whole of North Africa because she did not choose to enter the field in time and France has absorbed Tunis, Algiers and most of Morocco. But if there is to be European spheres in Asia Minor Germany must be recognised as entitled to ask as much as France in the matter. 2

The Foreign Office also accepted Kitchener's advice against allowing the French to build a railway from Rayak to El-Arish, but only to Ramleh, since this might constitute a strategic danger to Egypt, particularly as "foreign influence" might supersede the Ottoman one in the districts between the Euphrates and the Egyptian frontier.³

In the aftermath of the first phase of the Balkan War the Foreign Office envisaged quite a different Ottoman Empire than that which had existed before the War. The new tendency for decentralisation, started both in Beirut and Basra within the borders of the Empire was welcomed by the Foreign Office:

This is good news as far as it goes and it would be well if other vilayets would follow the example of Beirut.

The Foreign Office expected the Porte to ask for advisers for the re-organisation of the decentralised administration. But later in the year when the Reform Party of Beirut sought European intervention for their cause, the Foreign Office was

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1. Grey to Goschen, 23.1.13, tel. no. 35, ibid, nos. 546, 542. Grey to Buchanan, 27.1.13. See the rejection of Talib's separatist move at Basra: Lowther to Grey, 28.1.13, tel. no. 53. Grey to Lowther, 30.1.13, tel. no. 68. Grey to Rodd, 9.1.13, no. 10, ibid, no. 480. Same to same, 13.1.13, no. 15, ibid, nos. 503, 574.
 2. Grey to Buchanan, 28.1.13, no. 52, ibid, no. 564. Grey to Bertie, 31.12.12, no. 635. Bertie to Grey, 30.1.13, no. 48. Minute by Grey, 31.1, FO/371/1775.
 3. Kitchener to Grey, 11.5.13, no. 45. Minute by Vansittart, 19.5, FO/371/1813. Grey to Lowther, 6.6.13, tel. no. 245, ibid, nos. 88, 153.

distinctly against this new departure. Although the delegates from Beirut asked for a limited autonomy, Nicolson was prepared to receive them only if the Ottoman Ambassador saw no objection. The Foreign Office was relieved when the Porte stated its objection to the Beirut delegation, and when the French also preferred not to grant official treatment.¹

Nor was there any sympathy in the Foreign Office whatsoever, towards Zionist aspirations in Palestine. Mallet did not believe that the Jews could be made "good agriculturists" and regarded the question of Jewish immigration to Palestine as an internal Ottoman Problem. The Foreign Office was informed that the Arabs and the "old Turks" detested the Zionist movement. Lowther succeeded in convincing the Foreign Office that the Zionists were aiming at creating another national problem for the Porte.²

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The Foreign Office's image of the new Ottoman Empire rising out of the debris of the Balkan Wars was certainly less rosy than Hardinge's:

What I am anxious about [he wrote to Nicolson] ... is that as soon as the war is over England should reconsider her relations with, and her attitude towards Turkey. If Turkey becomes a great Asiatic Power, as she ought to become if she concentrates all her attention to the Asiatic provinces, we ought certainly to work hand in hand with her, and help her as much as lies in our power. An ideal arrangement would of course be an agreement between Turkey, Russia and England, but Russia is unfortunately always an uncomfortable bedfellow in such arrangements. What I hope is that in no case will we sit still and do nothing to assist Turkey. I need hardly tell you

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1. Lowther to Grey, 2.2.13, no. 82. Cumberbatch to Lowther, 24.1.13, no. 8. Minutes by Norman and Nicolson, 10.2. Same to same, 25.2.13, no. 156. Minute by Norman, 1.3, FO/371/1796. Same to same, 24.3.13, no. 238. Minute by Norman, 2.4. Same to same, 7.6.13, no. 504. Minutes, II, 6. BD.X.ii. App.III, pp.825/6. Carnegie to Grey, 26.6.13, no. 346. Minute by Norman, 28.6. Cromer to Tyrrell, 2.7.13. Minute 3.7, FO/371/1775/30562.
 2. Minutes by Norman and Mallet, 3-4.3.13, FO/371/1794/10066. Lowther to Grey, 17.3.13, no. 218. Minute by Norman, 16.4.

* Already in 1910, when Zionists and non-Zionists like Dr. Nosig, had made suggestions for the colonisation of Mesopotamia, Mallet doubted its success, since he regarded the Jews as "parasites" and not "good agriculturists". Marling to Grey, 27.12.09, no. 992, conf. Minutes, 3.1.10. Lowther to Grey, 31.8.10, no. 621, Minutes, 17.9.

that a friendly attitude to Turkey would be of the greatest importance in this country [India] where the support of the Mahommedans would give the Government a solid bulwark to lean upon. 1

The Foreign Office did not indulge in any optimism on the future of the Ottoman Empire. The more so as they appeared to agree with Lowther's revived antipathy to the Young Turks, resulting from the recent coup. He finally moulded his interpretation of the Young Turk Revolution:

There has been no "revolution" of the people in Turkey, and the change of regime in 1908 was the result of a pronunciamiento which handed the power over to an occult body whose principles seem akin to those which produced the revolution and the republic in France. 2

Lowther, like Guétshoff, the Bulgarian statesman, was by no means sanguine as to the stability of the CUP regime. He continued to transmit to the Foreign Office prophecies of possible counter-revolution or alternatively of a more radical change on the part of the extreme CUP.³ Nicolson, who naturally disliked the CUP, easily swallowed Lowther's predictions: "We have returned to much the same condition of affairs as existed in 1908, viz. that the Government is no Government at all. It is being run by a handful of desperadoes and an explosion may occur at any moment." Even the less biased Vansittart felt that it was "very unlikely" that the CUP regime would be long-lived.⁴ This led Nicolson to believe that even peace with the Balkan States would not save the Porte from "uprisings" in the Asiatic provinces:

My own belief [he wrote to Cartwright] is that it will not be possible for the Turks to maintain a hold in Asia. They are

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1. Hardinge to Nicolson, 24.2.13, Pte., NP., 364.
 2. Lowther to Grey, 15.3.13, no. 210, conf.
 3. Lowther to Nicolson, 27.2.13, Pte., LP. Same to same, 13.3.13, Pte., ibid. Goschen to Nicolson, 3.4.13, Pte., NP., 365.
 4. Nicolson to Bax-Ironside, 4.3.13, Pte., NP., 364. Nicolson to de Bunsen, 4.3.13, Pte., ibid. Nicolson to Goschen, 5.3.13, Pte., ibid. Same to same, 17.3.13, Pte., ibid. Lowther to Nicolson, 13.3.13, Pte., LP. Lowther to Grey, 3.3.13, no. 181. Minute by Vansittart, 8.3, FO/371/1798.

so thoroughly discredited as a fighting force and so disunited among themselves that the various non-Turkish races in Asia are not likely to lose an opportunity of furthering their own aims. This would produce a general welter in Asia and a consequent scramble among European Powers over the debris of that Empire... 1

This pessimism grew further after the fall of Adrianople on 26 March.

Nicolson was again perturbed by the possibility of a Bulgarian occupation of Constantinople which would certainly lead to the final disappearance of the Ottoman Empire. The "serious complications" which the occupation of Constantinople would create for Britain, led the British Government successfully to impress upon Russia the dangers of such an occupation.²

The Foreign Office, however, had partially recovered from their Pan-Islamic nightmare: "I do not know," wrote Nicolson to Lowther, "what effect all this [the occupation of Constantinople] would produce in India as it must be remembered that we should be passive spectators of the downfall of the last independent mussulman power."³ Still, Grey considered the possibility of sending naval force to defend the holy places of the Ottoman capital and perhaps the Sultan too, on account of the feelings of the Moslems in India and Egypt.

Lowther's despair of the Porte's recent "ineptitude" was not necessarily connected with the Bulgarian danger to Constantinople. The military defeats as such had left but "little respect" for the Government and therefore the disruption of the Empire "must" come. Neither he nor the Foreign Office believed that the concessions in the matter of language promised to the Arabs in certain Vilayets or those similarly asked for by the Kurds or Armenians would be carried out: "As long as the CUP remains in power,

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1. Nicolson to Cartwright, 17.3.13, Pte., BD.IX.ii, no. 728.
 2. Nicolson to Bax-Ironside, 3.4.13, Pte., NP., 364. Nicolson to Cartwright, 2.4.13., Pte., *ibid.* Nicolson to Townley, 8.4.13, Pte., NP., 365. Nicolson to Bax-Ironside, 15.4.13, Pte., *ibid.* Nicolson to Hardinge, 17.4.13, Pte., *ibid.* Lowther described Adrianople as the Alsace-Lorraine of the Young Turks, who were trying to imitate the French Commune of 1870. Lowther to Grey, 8.3.13, no. 189.
 3. Nicolson to Lowther, 2.4.13, Pte., NP., 364. Grey to Lowther, 4.4.13, tel. no. 166. Grey to Bertie, 10.4.13, no. 250, BD. *ibid.*, no. 830.

this anti-Turkish process would seem likely to grow until Turkey proper is reduced to the western half of Asia Minor."¹

But in the meantime the Young Turks were tightening their grip over the country. The murder of Shevket Pasha in June 1913 supplied them with an "excellent pretext" for the final elimination of any opposition. Lowther said that the new Government consisted of the CUP even more than its predecessor. But he dismissed the new Grand Vizier Prince Said Halim as not of "the political calibre to inspire confidence". Shortly after he described him as a "puppet in the hands of the Committee" without "any strength of character, not much energy and little action". The real power would reside with the Colonels Enver and Djemal and Remzi, and in the Cabinet with Talaat, Hairi and Halil, the President of the Chamber. The secret and massive arrests and exiles of the opponents of the CUP convinced Lowther that the Young Turks were following the political system of Portugal: "Their five years' experience has apparently convinced them that this form of constitutionalism is best suited for Turkey."²

Only a few days before Shevket's death Grey had expressed to the Commons his hope that the Porte would succeed in the consolidation of its Asiatic provinces by introducing "justice and sound finance", with Europe's help. This he had been promised in the hope that no disturbances should occur there since this might invite foreign intervention. Noel Buxton expressed the Balkan Committee's view when he demanded "real control" by Europe as had been urged by Grey himself in 1908 before the Young Turk Revolution. Mark Sykes on the other hand condemned in the Commons both Europe and the Young

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1. Lowther to Nicolson, 10.4.13, Pte., LP. Lowther to Grey, 21.4.13, no. Minute by Norman, 28.4, FO/371/1799. Same to same, 13.3.13, no. 198. Minute by Vansittart, 17.3.
 2. Same to same, 18.6.13, tel. no. 285, FO/371/1826. Same to same, 13.6.13, no. 528. Same to same, 19.6.13, no. 547. Lowther to Nicolson, 19.6.13, Pte., LP.

Turks and called upon the followers of both Gladstonian and Disraelian policies to assist the Ottoman Empire "wholeheartedly".¹

The Foreign Office certainly did not share Buxton's pessimistic approach. Neither were they so optimistic as Sykes. The Foreign Office was called upon not only to assist the Porte to reform itself but also was faced with the Ottoman request for defensive alliance with Britain. Britain now felt less embarrassed by her negative attitude than she had in October 1911. No-one in the Foreign Office in June 1913 regarded the Ottoman Empire as an asset for the purpose of an alliance. Even Mallet who it had been agreed, was to replace Lowther as Ambassador to the Porte, could not find one good reason to recommend such an alliance. Rather he saw it as "impractical" because of a new reason which had not been so conspicuous in 1911:

If other Powers with confessed ambitions in the Near East did not exist or were not strong enough to make their voices heard, there would be something very attractive in undertaking the regeneration of the Turkish Empire - which we have practically been invited to do ... if Turkey is to be reformed it will have to be with the assistance of all the Great Powers.

The truth as Mallet so clearly explained was that at present such an alliance would have united "all Europe" against Britain and would be a "source of weakness and danger" to both countries. The Triple Alliance might regard it as a "challenge" on the part of the Triple Entente, and it would particularly arouse German "jealousy". Mallet had a suggestion more practical than an alliance: "A less risky method would be by a treaty or declaration binding all the Powers to respect the independence and integrity of the present Turkish dominion, which might go so far as neutralisation; and by participation by all the Great Powers in financial control and the application of reforms." Grey had a better reason to favour the continuation of the Concert policy towards the Porte: "she would, when her fears subsided, resist efforts at reform and play off one Power against another unless all were united."²

1. Hansard, 29.5.13, Vol. LIII, cols. 397-8, 408-410, 378-381.

2. Note by Grey, 12.6.13, BD.X.i. App. Memo. by Mallet, 19.6. Minute by Grey, Grey to Tewfit, 2.7.13, Secret, ibid.

This refusal did not indicate a turning-point in British policy from one of encouraging the Porte to look to Britain for sympathy and inspiration to one of keeping the Porte neutral. The end of the sympathetic policy had occurred in the later part of 1910, and the advice to the Porte to remain neutral between the European alliances was already implicit in Britain's attitude of refusal in 1911.¹

Meanwhile the dissensions amongst the Allies provided the Porte with heaven-sent opportunity to recover some of its territory in the Balkans, mainly Adrianople, which was re-occupied on 22nd July. Hardly had the Treaty of London which established peace between Bulgaria and the Porte proved its efficacy, than the Foreign Office was faced with the possibility of the Porte taking advantage of the situation. Initially this was regarded as "remote" since the Ottomans were "too exhausted". But it was soon realised in the Foreign Office that the Porte could hardly resist the temptation. Now it was regarded by the Foreign Office as "very natural" for the Porte officially to order the Ottoman Commander in Chief to re-occupy former Ottoman territory. Nevertheless, Grey found it necessary to warn the Porte not to advance beyond the Enos-Midia line agreed in the Treaty of London. This, he added, increased the risk of European intervention and might again raise the question of Constantinople.²

But Britain was not ready to back her warning by strong measures such as naval demonstration as Sazonov had suggested. Sazonov himself was shortly after restrained in tone by the danger of Austrian action against Serbia, the possible closure of the Dardanelles and the "strong" opposition of the

1. Cf. Ahmad, "Great Britain's Relations", op. cit., p.323.

2. Nicolson to Cartwright, 24.6.13, Pte., NP., 367. Marling to Grey, 7.7.13, tel. no. 323. Minute by Norman, 8.7, FO/371/1833. Same to same, 9.7.13, tel. no. 325. Minute, 10.7. Same to same, 13.7.13, tel. no. 334. Minute, 14.7. Grey to Marling, 16.7.13, tel. no. 329, BD.IX.ii, no. 1151.

French.¹ Britain herself feared the danger that "a very strong" outburst of feeling might take place amongst the Moslems in India if Britain attempted to deprive the Porte of a recovered territory.² This new advantage for the Porte, was not offset by Marling's vain attempts to persuade the Foreign Office that Pan-Islam should be less reckoned with than at the time of the Akaba incident,

Marling also, urged the Foreign Office to exert financial pressure upon the Porte, but after realising that Enver and the Army had the "chief say in politics" he suggested action by Greece and Roumania against the Porte backed by Russian troops. Parker rejected the sacrifice of "our national interests because Bulgaria is reaping the just reward of a policy of adventure".

Nicolson too was prepared to exert such pressure only through the Financial Commission in Paris, but not to break off negotiations with Hakki. The Foreign Office objected to a Russian demonstration in the Caucasus to induce the Porte to give up Adrianople since this might bring with it the break-up of the Ottoman Empire itself. On the other hand the Germans were regarded as "not very helpful" when the Foreign Office was wondering what could be the right measure to coerce the Porte to retreat to the Enos-Midia line.³

The situation further deteriorated when Sazonov threatened that in the last resort Russia might invade the Armenian provinces. Britain fearing this might lead to the break-up of the Ottoman Empire, was looking for a compromise. Again, the Porte was warned that Britain would not support them if such a situation arose. Nevertheless, Britain was prepared that "reasonable"

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1. Buchanan to Grey, 18.7.13, tel. no. 268. Minutes, ibid, no. 1160. Same to same, 3.8.13, tel. no. 285, ibid, no. 1198. Buchanan to Nicolson, 7.8.13, Pte., NP., 369. Buchanan to Nicolson, 23.7.13, Pte., NP., 368.
 2. Nicolson to Buchanan, 29.7.13, Pte., NP., 368. Chirol warned that the Hindu nationalists might join hands with the Moslems. Memo. communicated by Sir V. Chirol, 10.7.13, FO/371/1853/31776. Hardinge to Nicolson, 22.7.13, NP., 369., Pte. Marling to Grey, 30.7.13, tel. no. 374. Minute by Norman, 31.7, also: BD., ibid, nos. 1228, 1232.
 3. Marling to Grey, 17.7.13, tel. no. 344. Minutes, 18.7, FO/371/1837. Same to same, 18.7.13, tel. no. 348. Minutes, 19-20.7. Same to same, 21.7.13, tel. no. 355. Minute by Norman, 22.7. Granville to Grey, 22.7.13, tel. no. 117, ibid, no. 1169. Marling to Nicolson, 1.8.13, Pte., NP., 369.

modifications might be made in the Enos-Midia line in the Ottoman's favour.¹

The bitterness of the Porte for being ill-treated by Europe on the question of Adrianople was exemplified by the reaction of Hakki Pasha in London. He accused Britain of favouring a pro-Bulgarian and pro-Greek policy and Asquith in particular for forgetting Palmerston's and Stratford Canning's policies. He attributed this to Asquith's service under Gladstone and to the influence of Noel Buxton. Parker while defending the British attitude could not resist saying: "The British Government's policy was in no way inspired or even influenced by the Balkan Committee, a collection of busybodies and nobodies who merely dabbled in foreign policy, and had become discredited and uninfluential." He claimed that Britain's policy was dictated by the will to maintain peace and to help the Ottoman Empire to become "really prosperous", but her recent action in Adrianople endangered her independence.²

But in fact the Foreign Office was embarrassed by Sazonov's aggressiveness towards the Porte. Mallet suggested that Sazonov should be reminded that Britain had a "defensive alliance" with the Porte and Cyprus had been given to her for this purpose. Nicolson admitted the "awkwardness" of Britain's position in the event of a Russian invasion of Asia Minor, but maintained that this should not be brought to Sazonov's knowledge.³

As soon as it was discovered that Sazonov would not use force, the Foreign Office was willing to see the Porte retain Adrianople. Norman thought this would suit British trade and please Britain's Moslem subjects. Mallet, still haunted by the idea of reform, suggested that this should be conditioned by a "real reform" of the entire Ottoman Empire. Marling's idea

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1. Buchanan to Grey, 23.7.13, tel. no. 273, ibid, no. 1173. Grey to Carnegie, 23.7.13, no. 464, ibid, no. 1174. Grey to Marling, 26.7.13, tel. no. 352, ibid, no. 1183.
 2. Minute by Parker, 25.7.13; approved by Nicolson and Grey, FO/371/1837/34768.
 3. Carnegie to Mallet, 23.7.13. Minutes, ibid, /34811. Annual Report for 1912, pp.7-8, in: Lowther to Grey, 17.4.13, no. 315.

to deprecate all the nearly concluded agreements with Hakki in London until the Porte agreed not to violate the Treaty of London, was strongly rejected in the Foreign Office, where Parker opposed any idea of sacrificing British "material interests" for the sake of "the most barbarous State in Europe" (Bulgaria). Marling proved unsuccessful in his attempt to agitate the Foreign Office against the Young Turks, who, in order to enhance their prestige would not hesitate to "embroil Europe into a general war". The Embassy was blamed for being out of touch with the Porte, and Marling in particular of becoming "exceedingly anti-Turkish".¹

The crossing of the Maritza by the Ottoman army led to a Russian suggestion that the Entente break off relations with the Porte. This was unacceptable to Britain because it could injure British "interests" and break up the Concert without having any effect on the Porte. Britain was only prepared to protest "strongly" with the rest of the Powers but not with the Entente alone. The Foreign Office admitted that only "fear of provoking Russia to the point of war will stop the Turks".²

The Powers soon realised that the Porte could not be frightened as in the recent past. The Foreign Office felt how "extraordinary" it was that the Porte, who only recently was "lying flat on her back", was now dictating "extremely unfavourable" peace proposals to Sofia. As it was now realised that the Powers, including Russia, were not going to compel the Porte to withdraw, the Foreign Office did not have any qualms about the Porte "squeezing" the Bulgarians. Nicolson even stated privately that he was "really pleased" that the Porte had retained Adrianople, and that it was "perhaps natural" that the Ottomans were defying the Powers. This, he

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1. Marling to Grey, 20.7.13, no. 639. Minute by Norman, 31.7. Granville to Grey, 15.8.13, tel. no. 13. Minute by Mallet, 16.8. Marling to Grey, 15.8.13, tel. no. 407. Minutes, 16.8. Grey to Marling, 18.8.13, tel. no. 409. Marling to Grey, 9.9.13, tel. no. 460. Minute by Norman, 10.9. Marling was also annoyed by Block's support of the CUP. Marling to Grey, 27.7.13, no. 683, very conf. Minutes, 5.8.
 2. Buchanan to Grey, 18.8.13, tel. no. 307. Minute by Norman, 19.8, ibid, no. 1242. Marling to Grey, 14.8.13, no. 772. Minute by Grey, 22.8, FO/571/1841.

continued, would strengthen the CUP's position in their Asiatic provinces, and consequently make it "more difficult than ever" to induce the Porte to introduce "serious or comprehensive" reform schemes.¹ Thus at the end of September the Powers were faced with the fait accompli of the Treaty of Constantinople placing the Porte on a much better footing than the Treaty of London.

Meanwhile, Greco-Ottoman negotiations for peace reached a deadlock. The Foreign Office found it necessary to inform the Porte that the prolongation of the state of war between the Ottomans and the Greeks had "considerably" affected British trade and shipping. The British Government, therefore, was interested that peace should be concluded at an early date between the two countries. The chief cause for Ottoman complaint was the decision reached by the Ambassadors' Conference in London to leave all the islands to Greece, except Tenedos, Imbros, Kastelloritzo, and the islands occupied by Italy. Grey, however, knew that there was no point in communicating the decision to either side because the Powers were not prepared to impose it by force. The Greeks were fearful that the Porte might try to recover mainly Mitylene and Chios. Here again Britain refused to depart from its principle of acting with the Concert in the event of the Porte using force, contrary to the Russian wish to act with the Entente alone.²

As far as Macedonia was concerned Marling warned that the CUP might try to obtain autonomy for Salonica and the hinterland. But in the Foreign Office nobody was prepared to re-open this question, though it was admitted that the population "for the most part" was neither Bulgarian, as Buxton believed, nor Serb. Norman considered them rather as "Slavs of a third kind",

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1. Nicolson to O'Beirne, 22.9.13, Pte., NP., 369. Marling to Grey, 8.9.13, tel. no. 459.
 2. Same to same, 30.9.13, tel. no. 494. Grey to Marling, 30.9.13, tel. no. 472. Grey to Nicolson, 1.10.13, NP., 370. Grey to Elliot, 27.9.13, no. 113, BD.X.1, no. 150. Grey to O'Beirne, 13.10.13, no. 349.

who therefore could have been granted autonomy as the "best change of a permanent solution", but of course, as Grey said in the Commons, this was not a "practicable solution".¹ The peace between Greece and the Ottoman Empire was finally signed in Bucharest through Roumanian intervention, on 14 November.

b) The Armenian Question: First Phase*

The Armenian question was the last of all the nationalities problems which had been brought to the fore by the failure of the Young Turks to govern the Ottoman Empire. Lowther, however, already understood in 1909 that the Adana massacres reflected the new situation created by the Revolution: "the ancient unquestioned dominance of the Turk has been shaken, at all events in appearance by the ideas of liberty, equality and fraternity". The ground was thus prepared for the coming showdown between the Young Turks and the Powers over the Armenian question.² But the Armenian question was considered in the Foreign Office as an internal Ottoman matter well until the Balkan Wars. The Foreign Office refused in 1909 to listen to the suggestion of the Armenophil Bryce, that the Powers intervene in the Armenian question by warning the Young Turks that a recurrence of the Adana massacres would bring in the Powers. Bryce was persuaded by Dr. G. Washburn that such intervention would strengthen the hands of the Young Turks, who sincerely desired to end the persecutions of the Christians. The idea was dismissed by Grey for

such a declaration as Dr. Washburn proposes might be a direct incitement to the Armenians to create disturbances which might provoke retaliation on the part of the Turks in the shape of massacres with a view to bring about the intervention of the Powers on behalf of the Armenians. ³

1. Marling to Nicolson, 9.10.13, Pte., NP., 370. Norman's Minute to Buxton's Parliamentary Question, 16.7, FO/371/1841. Hansard, 17.7.13, Vol. LV, col.1404. Marling to Grey, 14.10.13, tel. no. 504.
2. Lowther to Grey, 4.5.09, no. 321, FO/371/772.
3. Tyrrell to Lowther, 18.8.09, Pte., HP., 192. Bryce to Grey, 21.7.09, Pte., same to same, 29.7.09, Pte., Washburn to Bryce, 29.7.09, Pte., ibid.

* For a general background: E. Kedourie, "Minorities" in: The Chatham House Version, (London, 1970), pp.286-300.

At the beginning of the Tripoli War the Consul's reports from the Armenian provinces showed that the situation there was more acute than in the previous year since the land problem was still unsolved and the relations with the Kurds were as bad as ever. The Armenians argued that the Constitution did not exist and that they would never fraternise with the "Turks". Another significant development was the petition which was presented by them to the Russian Consul-General at Erzaroum stating their desire to join the Russian Orthodox Church, and thus obtain Russian support for their demands. The Foreign Office, though admitting that a small improvement only had been achieved under the new regime, still clung to the view that Britain could do nothing to help the Armenians. But there was another view in the Foreign Office that in this the Armenians were (since the 1908 Revolution), "almost" as much to blame as the Kurds.¹ In December 1911 Lowther could not yet admit the failure of the CUP in the Armenian provinces and regarded the "lawlessness", reported by Safrastian, the Vice-Consul at Bitlis, as "somewhat" biased since he was of Armenian descent. But in the Foreign Office, in January 1912, Norman concluded that there had been but "very little" improvement in the situation, since the new regime was "as chary" of tackling the Kurds as was the old. Moreover, their lot was even worse since "they no longer can have the representations of the Embassies in their favour". Nevertheless, the Foreign Office was careful to keep the new information on the anti-Armenian policy of the CUP from the knowledge of the Friends of Armenia: "If we do communicate it to them they will expect us to take steps which we cannot take."²

In September 1912 the situation reached a crisis. Unrest was reported to prevail amongst the Kurds since the fall of the late Cabinet. At Diarbekir

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1. Lowther to Grey, 29.10.11, no. 757, very conf. Friends of Armenia to Grey, 24.11.11. Minute by Norman, 25.11, FO/371/1263/47083. Lowther to Grey, 2.12.11, no. 884. Minute by Parker, 18.12. Same to same 14.10.11, no. 710, Minute by Grey, 1.11.
 2. Lowther to Grey, 26.12.11, no. 954. Minute by Norman, 11.1.12, FO/371/1484. Same to same, 24.1.12, no. 70. Minute by Norman, 30.1.

they prepared victims to celebrate the possible return of Abdul-Hamid. The Bederkhan chieftains entertained the hope of establishing an autonomous Kurdistan under Russian tutelage. The Armenian Patriarch warned the liberal Grand Vizier Ghazi Moukhtar and his Minister of Justice that if the Porte failed to protect the Armenians they might be forced to apply to "other quarters". The Porte's decision to allocate £100,000 to the five Armenian vilayets raised the hope in the Foreign Office that this would diminish the Armenians' "widespread ill-feeling". Marling, indeed, was full of optimism as to the "excellent impression" that the "evidences of good-will" (the appointment of new Valis for Van and Bitlis) on the part of Ghazi Moukhtar's Government had made upon the Armenians. "No previous Turkish Government," wrote Norman, "has ever shown such good intentions as regards Armenia." The Sheikh-ul-Islam's instruction to his subordinates to influence the believers against any anti-Armenian crimes was also welcomed in the Foreign Office as a "very good move".¹

But the situation in the Balkans caused a rapid deterioration in the situation. Lowther reported that Agence Ottomane had reported that Moslems had been massacred in Bulgaria and that the Armenians in Bulgaria had formed a committee to collect funds and enlist recruits for their brothers in East Anatolia. Vansittart maintained that in "normal" times the Ghazi Moukhtar's Government could have been successful but the outbreak of the Balkan War could "only influence the situation of Turkey in Asia for the worse". In November Lowther's report on the general state of unrest in Eastern Anatolia was described in the Foreign Office as a "bad account".² His conclusion was that the Adana massacres of 1909 and the constant threat of its repetition had convinced the Armenians that a Russian occupation would be more palatable

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1. Marling to Grey, 4.9.12, no. 741, Minutes, 10.9. Marling to Grey, 11.9.12, no. 777. Minute by Oliphant, 19.9. Same to same, 17.9.12, no. 787, conf. Minute by Norman, 24.9, ibid, /40029. Minute by Norman, 24.9.
 2. Lowther to Grey, 9.10.12, no. 847, Minute, 15.10. Same to same, 10.11.12, no. 957. Minute by Vansittart, 18.11. The Bulgarian Government appealed on behalf of the Armenians on 30.12. Grey to Bax-Ironside, 30.12.12, no. 47, FO/371/1773.

than their present condition. Certainly they would prefer the Russians to the Germans in Cilicia, because they had no confidence in Germany since the Kaiser's declaration of friendship to Abdul Hamid after the 1896 massacres.

In the Foreign Office, however, they still relied on Kiamil's Government to look after the Armenians. Basically the Foreign Office's attitude did not undergo any change at the beginning of the Balkan War: "We cannot do anything practical in behalf of the Armenian population in Asia Minor." The Foreign Office was far from the "busybody" Atkin, a War Office clerk, who suggested nothing less than the intervention of British and Russian cruisers on behalf of the Armenians.¹

The Balkan Committee also tried to draw the Foreign Office into a new initiative in the Armenian question with their suggestion that the system of government which had been established for the Lebanon in 1864 should be applied to the Armenian provinces. "The Balkan Committee," Maxwell commented, "are obliged to seek some other vent for their energies now that their raison d'être in Macedonia has ceased to exist." The Foreign Office rejected the suggestion in the hope that the Porte would follow the "very satisfactory" action of the Sheikh-ul-Islam with more "adequate measures". Besides, Nicolson wrote:

... It would be but fair, unless it would urgently demand otherwise, to give the Ottoman Government in their present serious difficulties time to deal with pressing questions and not worry them on other matters. 2

A little later, Mallet admitted that if a conference for the revision of the Treaty of Berlin took place it would be "necessary" to re-consider Article 61. After all none of the Consuls found the condition of the Armenians satisfactory. Even Monahan, a Consul who had served at Erzeroum and disliked the Armenians, was forced to admit that the Porte was "not

1. Lowther to Grey, 4.12.12, no. 1036, conf. Minute by Mallet, 27.12. Atkin to Foreign Office, 30.10.12. Minute by Vansittart, 5.11, FO/371/1520/46286. Same to same, 11.11.12. Minute by Vansittart, 12.11, ibid,/48214.
2. The Balkan Committee to Grey, 29.11.12. Minutes, 2.12, ibid/51957.

directly persecuting or oppressing Armenians, but seems for the present unable to govern tolerably her part of the Armenian hinterland." The Armenians hoped that the war in the Balkans might prove the final defeat of Ottoman "military arrogance". Like the other Consuls, Monahan felt that Russia would intervene in spite of Lynch's view in 1901 that the Armenians preferred the bondage of the body by the Porte to the bondage of the spirit by Russia. The Foreign Office did not ignore this constant information about the CUP's failure in handling the Armenian question, but could by no means share the opinion of the Friends of Armenia that the only solution of the Armenian question would be the appointment of a Christian Governor, independent of the Porte and controlled by the Powers. The British Government thought that at present this might do "more harm than good" and was not "practical".¹

But although outwardly the Foreign Office still regarded the Armenian question as an internal Ottoman matter, their attitude towards Ottoman rule in Asia Minor had undergone a considerable change as a result of the disastrous defeat of the Ottomans in the Balkan War. Lowther's belief that the Armenians would no longer be satisfied with "palliatives" and would expect more drastic solutions such as autonomy, under the auspices of Russia also had caused serious concern in the Foreign Office in mid-January 1913. Mallet felt that the Armenian leaning towards Russia "might inaugurate the division of Asia Minor between the Powers". Nicolson forecast more ominously: "The annexation to Russia of the vilayets mentioned is but a question of time." Hope was no longer placed in Kiamil's Government as Grey now found it opportune to define Britain's claims in view of those of Russia. "The open door for trade and a good arrangement about the Persian Gulf and below Baghdad are our ambitions."²

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1. Minute by Mallet, 6.12.12, *ibid*/51597. Lowther to Grey, 29.11.12, no. 1006. Monahan to Lowther, 2.11.12, no. 84, in: Grey to Lowther, 18.12.12, no. 569. Friends of Armenia to Grey, 16.12.12, *ibid*/53992. H.F.B. Lynch, Armenia, (1901), I, pp.463-464 (referred to by Monahan).
 2. Lowther to Grey, 31.12.12, no. 1229. Minutes, 15.1, FO/371/1773.

In the discussions amongst the Powers Britain did not sound so pessimistic as to the Porte's ability to solve the Armenian question. Grey agreed with Sazonov and Cambon that after the war the Powers should put the Ottoman Empire "on her feet as regards her Asiatic possessions, and there might be then an opportunity of dealing with the question of reforms in Asia Minor". Norman commented that only a Russian occupation could prevent a massacre, but this was undesirable for "other reasons". Nobody questioned the information that as a result of the coup d'etat the position of the Armenians had become "very perilous". A week later Norman was convinced otherwise: "Annexation [by Russia] however would be the best way to ameliorate the condition of the Armenians in Turkish territory."¹ The Foreign Office now found itself nearer to the point of view of the Friends of Armenia when they admitted that nothing could be done for the Armenians as long as the Porte had the executive power. The conclusion was that foreign control was "no doubt" the only way. Mallet thought the British Government should better dispel the "common misapprehension" that Britain was bound to evacuate Cyprus if she failed to insist upon the introduction of reform in Asia Minor. Only the restoration to the Ottomans of Batoum, Ardhan and Kars would justify the evacuation of Cyprus, as Salisbury had made clear on 30 May 1878.²

It was further admitted in the Foreign Office that representations would be useless as it was claimed that the CUP Government was unable and probably unwilling to improve the conditions of the Armenians. The Foreign Office could nonetheless sympathise with the Armenian anxiety on the rumour of Europe's intention to guarantee the integrity of the Ottoman provinces in Asia without insisting on the introduction of reforms.³

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1. Grey to Bertie, 23.1.13, no. 55. BD.X.1, no. 475. A.G. Symonds to Grey, 30.1.13. Minute by Norman, 3.2, FO/371/1773. Buchanan to Grey, 3.2.13, no. 36. Minute by Norman, 10.2.
 2. Lady Cavendish to Grey, 16.1.13. Minutes, 12.2, ibid/6585. Grey (Mallet) to Lady Cavendish, 4.3.13, ibid. Lady Cavendish to Grey, 24.3.13 (Letter from Bryce). Minutes, 27.3, ibid/13668. Molyneux-Seel to Lowther, 22.1.13, no. 2, in: Lowther to Grey, 13.2.13, no. 111.
 3. Lowther to Grey, 15.3.13, no. 203. Minute by Norman, 19.3. Same to same, 17.3.13, no. 219, conf. Minute by Norman, 27.3.

As long as the Balkan problems remained unsettled the British Government expressed the hope to the Porte that it should take the question of reforms into "urgent consideration" and instruct the Valis to take "every means" in their power to defend the Armenians. Fitzmaurice was careful to demonstrate Britain's impartiality to Shevket when he told the Grand Vizier that the Adana massacres of 1909 were a result of "an exaggerated state of mind" on both sides. Britain ruled out any possibility of intervention in the growing unrest in the Armenian provinces. As in other parts of the Ottoman Empire, Britain was prepared only to protect her own subjects along the Ottoman coasts.¹

The most "disquieting" report which reached the Foreign Office came from Van. Norman who wrote that "anything may happen in these regions at almost any moment", commented that only Russian troops could restore order in the event of an outbreak, and he was forced to conclude:

taking our reports from Van with those from Beirut, Aleppo, Adana, Mosul and Basra, the break up of the Turkish Empire in Asia as well as in Europe appears not to be far off. 2

Fitzmaurice, an old Armenophile, now advised the Armenians to wait till the Balkan problems settled. He supported their case because of the German attempt to guarantee the Ottoman provinces in Asia and hoped that the British Government would not be tempted by Germany to antagonise Russia. Since he believed that the Ottoman Empire had ceased to be "a healthy body" and "is only propped up by parasitical growth - that of the financiers mainly", it was not surprising that he saw the destruction of the Ottoman Empire as a "natural" process. He supported his plea for the Armenian cause not only by "sentiment" but also by Britain's

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1. Lowther to Grey, 6.4.13, no. 281. Minute by Mallet, 15.4. Same to same, 5.4.13, no. 279. Minute by Norman, 15.4. Same to same, 19.4.13, no. 329. Same to same, 24.4.13, no. 343. Minute by Norman, 28.4. Grey to Lowther, 29.4.13, tel. no. 199, British Armenia Committee to Grey, 28.4.13. Minutes, 2.5, FO/371/1773/19706.
 2. Helyear-Seel to Lowther, 4.4.13, no. 9, in: Lowther to Grey, 26.4.13, no. 350. Minute, 1.5, FO/371/1783, same to same, 13.3.13, no. 198.

"responsibilities" according to Article 61, the Cyprus Convention, and the advantage British commerce had always derived from its "best asset" in Asia Minor - i.e. the Armenians who were the "go-ahead" economic element in that area.¹

The Armenian question reached a new turning-point in the late April when the Porte asked the British Government for inspectors of gendarmerie, agriculture and public works, gendarmerie officers, adviser and an inspector-general for the Ministry of the Interior. Norman and Mallet reacted enthusiastically and suggested they lose no time in complying with it. Mallet even regarded it politically as "very important":

We want Turkey to remain a Power in Asia and we want reforms for the Armenians. Unless reforms are introduced, it is certain that Turkish Power will decline and that there will be massacres and troubles of all kinds in these provinces ... We are the only people who could undertake the duty and carry it through successfully and the only Power who would be allowed by the other Powers to undertake it, as it is recognised that we have no territorial and political ambitions in these Provinces. This proposal offers us the only opportunity which we have ever had of doing anything for the Armenians and if we shirk it, and allow others to take our place, our influence and prestige must decline - and we shall be much criticised here.

Nicolson was less enthusiastic since he saw the dangers of such an application for both the Porte and the British Government. He was disappointed that the reform did not cover the whole of Asia Minor, and felt that the advisers for the Ministry of Interior might arouse the "jealousy" of the Powers. His solution was that Russia, France and Germany should be also called upon to supply advisers and that Russia, as she bordered on the vilayets in question, should be consulted.²

1. Fitzmaurice to Nicolson, 31.3.13, Pte., NP., 364. Lowther to Grey, 28.4.13, no. 355.
2. Tawfit to Grey, 24.4.13. Minutes, 29.4, ibid, no. 479. (Minutes by Norman and Maxwell, FO/371/1814.)

Since Britain was afraid that her monopoly of supplying advisers to the Porte would enhance the struggle for "spheres of influence" amongst the Powers, she was ready to agree to the participation of the other Powers. But, as Lowther pointed out, the advocacy of the idea of advisers of different nationalities might also bring to a crisis the tendency to mark "spheres of interests" for the Powers' activities.¹

Nicolson therefore suggested that the Ottoman request should be "whittled down" as much as possible, to the point of only one adviser to the Ministry of Interior and gendarmerie officers. Lowther remained sceptical: "How can one want to serve the Turkish Government is above my comprehension!" he remarked about the British subjects who had applied to act as inspectors. He also doubted the efficacy of sending only one gendarmerie officer to each vilayet.²

Nicolson, however, was so cautious that when he had to decide between reform and the danger of raising the question of "spheres of influence", he naturally sacrificed reform. Thus when the Porte asked for inspectors for Smyrna, Broussa and Constantinople, Nicolson rejected the request claiming that "very many" foreign interests were involved in the last two, although Norman and Maxwell maintained that there were "no special foreign interests" in these vilayets. This was in fact a dilemma which Nicolson wanted to avoid since his basic belief, as he had written one week earlier to Lowther, was that :

The Turks must really take some serious steps for introducing reforms throughout their Asiatic dominions or otherwise they may get into serious trouble. We do not at all wish after our experience in European Turkey to have further difficulty in dealing with their Asiatic dominions. ³

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1. Lowther to Grey, 29.4.13, no. 363. Grey to Tewfit, 24.5.13, *ibid*, no. 491.
 2. Nicolson to Lowther, 27.5.13, Pte., LP. Lowther to Nicolson, 22.5.13, Pte., *ibid*. Lowther to Grey, 9.5.13, tel. no. 225. Minutes, 10.5, *ibid*, no. 481.
 3. Communication from Tewfit, 21.5.13. Minutes, 22.5, *ibid*, no. 487. Nicolson to Lowther, 41.5.13, Pte., LP.

Thus in order to satisfy all the Powers concerned, including the Porte, the Foreign Office's idea was to draw all the Powers into taking part in the execution of the reforms in question and thus to avoid any jealousy on their part.¹ But this British attitude was soon to face the strong objection of Russia.

In late May Sazonov made it clear that he would not agree to British gendarmerie officers in the Armenian vilayets, for Russia could not play "second violin" there. Sazonov's stiff objection was more than the Foreign Office expected, because it was believed that the British contribution was reduced to the "very narrowest possible limits". Norman, Maxwell and Mallet thought that Britain should not give way to Russia's demand, and that if Britain refused the Porte might turn to Germany. Nicolson, however, realised that Sazonov was under "pressure" from the Armenians to introduce "effective" reforms and that Britain ought to be careful to avoid any friction between Russia and the Porte. He concluded, therefore, that he had better leave the initiative to Russia and consent to the Armenian question being discussed by the Entente Ambassadors at Constantinople on the basis of the 1895 scheme. This was to be followed by consultation with the Porte and the Triple Alliance Powers. As to the consent already given to the Porte concerning the gendarmerie officers, Nicolson was not prepared to give it up. He was only ready to defer their actual engagement by the Porte until the general scheme of reform was ready.²

Sazonov, however, was not going to make things easy for Britain. His fierce objection to the British proposition raised Norman's suspicion that the Russian Foreign Minister was seeking the employment of Russian officials to which the Porte could never agree and thus working for a

1. Grey to O'Beirne, 23.5.13, tel. no. 422, ibid, no. 1489.

2. O'Beirne to Grey, 26.5.13, tel. no. 197. Minutes, 27.5, ibid, no. 492. Grey to O'Beirne, 28.5.13, tel. no. 424, ibid, no. 495.

pretext for the "inevitable" annexation of the Armenian vilayets. But Britain was in fact saved by Germany's opposition to Russian policy. Germany made it clear that she regarded the Russian attitude as an aspiration for a "sphere of influence" rather than an expression of her genuine interest in Ottoman reform. Germany was also suspicious of Britain's policy, since according to her information, the British were about to re-organise the Ottoman civil service, which might imply another Egypt.¹

Whilst the Foreign Office was inhibited by the desire to prevent an Ottoman-Russian conflict, in order to assure the success of reform, the Embassy tried to tempt the Foreign Office to accept the realities of "spheres of influence". Lowther felt that the Ottomans meant to create "maximum of friction and antagonism" amongst the Entente Powers, by asking for British officials for a Russian "sphere of influence". This, he maintained, might lead to the engagement of German officials in reforming Mesopotamia. Therefore, he suggested that the foreign advisers for the Armenian vilayets should be Russian, those for Mesopotamia British, those for Syria French, and those for Adana and West Asia Minor, German or others. In order to strengthen his point of view he warned that the matter must be seen in terms of the European Alliances. The Ottoman project backed by Germany, now in the ascendant at Constantinople since the CUP had regained power, was intended to exclude Russia. This was out of the question since the Armenians themselves favoured reforms only under Russian auspices. Any other project, which must be anti-Russian in character, was "almost certain to be fraught with disastrous instead of beneficial results". The Foreign Office, however, was still far away from Fitzmaurice's and

1. O'Beirne to Grey, 27.5.13, no. 172, ibid., no. 494. Minute by Norman, 5.6, FO/371/1814. Grey to Goschen, 2.6.13, no. 176, ibid., no. 499. Goschen to Grey, 10.6.13, tel. no. 88.

Lowther's "radical solution" of "cutting the tie of Turkish direct rule". It was hoped that the Ottoman project was due to a "genuine desire" to avoid Russian intervention and, though it might have been intended to generate Angle-Russian friction, the Russian frontier authorities need not make the task of the British gendarmerie officers more difficult by intriguing with Kurds and Armenians.¹

Fitzmaurice spoke more freely than Lowther on the necessity of ending Ottoman sovereignty in the Armenian vilayets. He had earlier suggested that Russia be given the actual control of these vilayets as Austria had been given that of Bosnia and Herzegovine in 1878, or as had been the case with Egypt in 1882, though he admitted that in such a case Germany might do a second "Agadir" at Alexandretta or a "Kiaschiao" [sic] at Mersina-Adana.²

The gulf between the Embassy and the Foreign Office was again exemplified when Sazonov refused to accept the Porte's participation in the deliberations of the Powers at Constantinople. The Foreign Office insisted that the Porte, Germany and Austria had to be consulted if the reform scheme was to be "swallowed" by the Porte. Mallet went as far as blaming the Russians for using one of their consuls as an Agent provocateur and:

It might at the same time be as well to remind His Excellency [the Russian Ambassador in London] of the extent to which we are committed to the maintenance of Turkish integrity and to her regeneration, of our opposition to anything in the nature of a policy which would lead to her further dismemberment - a policy which would raise amongst others the question of Constantinople and which could hardly be carried out without a European war. 3

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1. Lowther to Grey, 6.6.13, no. 503, conf., *ibid.*, no. 503. Minute by Keeling, 11.6, FO/371/1814. Minute by Norman, 19.5, in: same to same, 13.5.13, no. 416. Conf. Fitzmaurice to Tyrrell, 8.5.13, Pte., GP. 80.
 2. Ibid.
 3. O'Beirne to Grey, 11.6.13, tel. no. 210, conf. Minutes, 12.6, ibid., nos. 507, 508.

Britain won her first victory when Sazonov accepted the British view that the Ottoman Empire should not be divided into "secteurs". Mallet thought that if France took the same attitude "we shall hear no more of spheres of influence". The second victory was Russia's consent to the British proposal that the draft of the reform scheme should be prepared by all the Powers.¹ In informal discussion between the Entente Ambassadors it was agreed that the draft should be based on the 1895 reforms, the revised law of 1880, the Cretan and the Lebanese Statutes and the new Ottoman law on the vilayets of 1913. Grey hoped that as soon as progress was made the Ambassadors would consider reforms for all the Asian provinces of the Ottoman Empire.²

Britain's idea was that if the Ottoman Empire was to be consolidated the policy of dividing it into "spheres of influence" had to be stopped and reforms implemented. Germany was more in agreement with Britain on this than was Russia. Grey admitted to the German Ambassador that "Chiefs" from Basra and the Gulf (he did not mention Beirut) applied for Britain's protection but were not encouraged. The real difficulty was Russia, whose sincerity in maintaining "the strength and integrity" of the Ottoman Empire was questioned by Mallet. Nicolson, however, was ready to compromise with Russia and send the gendarmerie officers only to the four vilayets not adjoining the Russian border.³ Britain withdrew her plan to send gendarmerie officers to the Armenian vilayets. Instead the idea of employing officers from a minor and neutral power was now put forward.⁴ As to the British

1. Buchanan to Grey, 16.6.13, tel. no. 220. Minutes, ibid, nos. 511, 512. Same to same, 21.6.13, tel. no. 229.

2. Lowther to Grey, 17.6, no. 545, conf. Minutes, 24.6, ibid, no. 515.

3. Grey to Goschen, 27.6.13, no. 208, ibid, nos. 526, 1537. Buchanan to Grey, 1.7.13, tel. no. 240. Minutes, 2.7, ibid, no. 531. Goschen to Grey, 2.7.13, tel. no. 92. Minute by Mallet, ibid, no. 532.

4. Buchanan to Grey, 2.7.13, tel. no. 242. Minutes, 4.7, ibid, nos. 535, 536. Grey to Buchanan, 4.7.13, tel. no. 498, ibid, no. 541. Marling to Grey, 4.7.13, tel. no. 314. Minute by Mallet, 5.7, ibid, nos. 540, 544.

gendarmerie officers, Norman suggested that since France would not like to see them in Syria, nor Germany or Russia in most of Asia Minor, they might go to Mesopotamia or Palestine.¹ Britain made it clear to Russia that she would never agree to any plan which might lead to the partition of the Ottoman Empire, such as the Russian one which aimed for a Russian Governor-General for the Armenian vilayet. Chirol had warned Mallet that the effects of such a plan, leading to partition would be "disastrous" for the British in India.

The vigorous anti-Ottoman attitude which Russia had assumed caused some difference of opinion in the Foreign Office as to what British policy should be. Mallet's attitude was more pro-Ottoman than ever before, whatever his motives:

... One cannot but assume that a statesman taking up the attitude of M. Sazonov at this juncture in Turkish history, is making for the disruption of the Empire ... I should like to remind him that the Armenian question is an interest of all the Powers (see Berlin Treaty). It is an especial and vital interest of ours, as the partition of Asiatic Turkey would have the most serious effect on our position in the Mediterranean and disastrous results in India.

As to Nicolson, nothing was further from his mind than a clash with Russia as he was too aware of the importance of the Entente with Russia. He was, therefore, ready to admit that Russia had a "more immediate and direct interest" than any other Power in the Armenian vilayets. He was ready to work together with Russia "calmly and temperately". He was prepared for concessions as long as Sazonov agreed to two conditions which alone could assure the success of the reform scheme: "Unanimity amongst the Powers" and "Acceptance of their scheme by Turkey without coercion".² In fact Nicolson shared Mallet's apprehensions but they still differed as to the future success of Ottoman reform:

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1. Buchanan to Grey, 2.7.13, tel. no. 243, *ibid*, no. 536. Minutes 3.7, FO/371/1814.
 2. Buchanan to Grey, 6.7.13, tel. no. 247. Minutes, 7.7, *ibid*, no. 542. Grey to Buchanan, 9.7.13, tel. no. 508, *ibid*, no. 547.

What is termed the Russian proposal for reforms in Armenia [Nicolson wrote to Cartwright] is a very far reaching one but if one considers it in a purely impartial spirit and bearing in mind experiences of history it is clear that it is only some project of some such character which is likely to ensure a peaceful development of the country to which it applies ... Our policy is to endeavour to maintain and consolidate Turkish dominion in Asia. I should not if I were called upon to do so defend such a policy upon any higher ground than simple expediency and an unwillingness to be parties to any measures which might alienate or disappoint our moslem population in India. In my heart of hearts I have the very gravest doubts, apart from any question of morals, whether it will be possible to maintain Turkish dominion for any great length of time. The prestige of the Turk as a fighting machine and also as a soldier of Islam has entirely disappeared and there are many indications to show that the spirit has gone out of the Turks and that they are really no longer capable of maintaining the position they have hitherto enjoyed. This fact will I doubt not soon become general throughout the Asiatic provinces and will I expect lead to movements tending to disintegration. 1

Though Mallet was hardly as pessimistic as Nicolson he still had to warn Hakkı that the "terrible state of affairs" in the Erzeroum vilayet must be stopped "if the integrity of Turkey was to be maintained". Mallet insisted that "Europe would not stand this any longer", and that the Porte "must" find some way of controlling the Kurds. He justified the British suspension of the gendarmerie officers by the necessity to prevent the participation of Russian officers in the vilayets in question.²

The Foreign Office was more concerned with the question how the different points of view of the various Powers could be brought into a compromise. Hence the persistent refusal of the Foreign Office to act with the Entente, as Russia wished, but rather with the Concert.³ Even so the gap between the Ottoman project and the Russian one was, Sazonov said, like that between fire and water. Britain's view was well defined by Buchanan who said: "I despair of reconciling them or of persuading him [Sazonov] that remedy which he proposes may prove more dangerous than disease".⁴

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1. Nicolson to Cartwright, 8.7.13, Pte., NF.368. Nicolson to Marling, 9.7.13, Pte., ibid, no.548.
 2. Marling to Grey, 1.7.13, no.575. Minutes, 8.7.
 3. Buchanan to Grey, 8.7.13, tel. no.251. Minutes, 9.7, ibid, no.545.
 4. Same to same, 13.7.13, tel. no.258, ibid, no.554.

But in the Embassy at Constantinople, now directed by Marling, anti-German and pro-Russian feelings ran high. Marling dismissed the German threat to demand an established sphere of influence in Cilicia as not serious because it would be an isolated German "colony" which could not be formidable. The Ottoman plan was in fact a German one which meant "to throw dust in our eyes". He admitted that the Russian project was "very far-reaching" but "essential if anything really good is to be done". Marling warned the Foreign Office that the Armenians would not accept the German-Ottoman project and, being in a state of unrest, they might provoke a Russian intervention. Mallet rejected Marling's arguments since he had no intention of arguing with the Germans. The aim of the Foreign Office was to bring about a compromise between the different points of view and not to establish who had more interest in Asia Minor, Russia or Germany. Nicolson, however, accepted Marling's view as "sound and practical".¹

Britain's aim was to break the deadlock created by the polarised attitudes of Germany and Russia. The German plan called upon the Porte to complete their project according to the Ottoman decree of 1895, for the creation of a committee of control, half of whose members should be Ottomans and half delegates of the Powers, presided over by an Ottoman chairman. The Russian one, prepared by Mandlestam, the Chief Dragoman, called for the union of the six Armenian vilayets into one united Armenia to be governed by a Christian Governor-General independent of the Porte.²

Meanwhile, the Armenian Reform Commission, composed of the Powers' Dragomans, proved that the differences between Russia and Germany were part of a much wider issue. It was discovered to be a question which stood between

1. Marling to Nicolson, 2.7.13, Pte., NP.368. Same to same, 11.7.13, Pte., ibid, Marling to Grey, 12.7.13, no. 621. Minute by Nicolson, 24.7, ibid, no. 553. Minute by Mallet, FO/371/1814.

2. Grey to Granville, 22.7.13, no. 236, ibid, nos. 562, 563.

the Triple Entente and the Triple Alliance. Fitzmaurice naturally supported the Russian scheme, though in a "general and non-committal" way, and thus Mallet's opposition to Russia proved to have negligible influence. Grey, however, was optimistic as to the results of the discussions in the Commission because he believed that the differences between the two groups of Powers were not a matter of substance but to a great extent a question of form.¹ But it was obvious that Britain had to follow Russia because of questions of high policy, despite their belief that the Armenians hated their Russian protectors. The Foreign Office based this on the information from the Consul at Van who strengthened the impression in London that the position of the Armenians in Russia was "far from enviable - no better, in fact than that of any other of the subject races of the [Russian] Empire".²

Still, the belief in the Foreign Office that a compromise could be reached in the Armenian question was the motive behind Grey's declaration in the Commons that the representatives of the Powers who were discussing the question did not have "the establishment of different spheres of interest in the Turkish Empire" in view. The Eastern Department which had accepted the German view that the Russian scheme meant the first step towards partition, had to wait and see if Grey's and Nicolson's belief in a compromise could materialise. But Grey's statement in the Commons was more wishful thinking than an established fact.³ While the Eastern Department felt that Russia's claim for a privileged position in Armenia would open the door wide to "spheres of influences" and then to partition, the Embassy thought that Germany was only "too pleased to dismember Turkey". This could be interpreted on the grounds of Marling's and Fitzmaurice's

1. Marling to Grey, 22.7.13, no. 641. Minutes, 29.7. Fitzmaurice's Memo., 10.8.13, in: same to same, 27.8.13, no. 747, very conf., *ibid.*, no. 567.
2. Marling to Grey, 25.7.13, no. 666. Molyneux-Seel to Marling, 9.7.13, no. 18. Minute by Norman, 2.8, FO/371/1773.
3. Grey's reply to Sir J. Barran, 12 August, 1913, Hansard, Vol. LVI, col. 2229.

hatred of Germany and of Wangenheim, her Ambassador to the Porte. Their presupposition was that the Armenian vilayets were a legitimate Russian interest but would not create a "sphere of interest", while Cilicia could never be justified as a German "sphere". Marling's and Fitzmaurice's campaign against Germany stemmed also from the conviction that Wangenheim would not risk "Germany's present paramount influence" with the CUP for the sake of an efficient scheme, by which they meant the Russian scheme.¹

But both the British and German representatives at Constantinople knew that the Foreign Office was greatly influenced in its policy of restraining Russia by the fear of the Pan-Islamic bogey. Fitzmaurice rightly attributed considerable importance to this point in assessing the Foreign Office's calculations and was determined to destroy what he believed was only a myth:

Under the new regime Panislamism is run by atheists and devotees of Voltaire to scare the Powers having Moslem subjects, while the Indian Mohammedan agitation, as in the case of Adrianople, is mainly wirepulled by Ottoman Red Crescent agencies and is in great part artificial. If tenderness for Indian Moslem sentiment ... is to deter us from bringing pressure to bear to induce the Ottoman Government ... to apply a radical remedy ... it would almost seem better that England should completely disinterest herself in the matter ...

Fitzmaurice regarded the Armenian question as a touchstone for British policy. His main argument was that "semi-autonomy" for the Armenians was a necessity. He cited the example of the Yemen to support his view. The Young Turks' refusal to guarantee semi-autonomy to the Yemen in 1908 was later to be proved a mistake since they failed to administer this area. Moreover, it was a good example, according to Fitzmaurice, for it demonstrated that granting semi-autonomy to one region, as had been proved by the case of the Yemen, did not have "a disintegrating echo" on other regions.²

1. Marling to Nicolson, 1.8.13, Pte., op. cit., Fitzmaurice's Memo., 10.8.13, op. cit.

2. Fitzmaurice's Memo., ibid. Fitzmaurice claimed that in 1908 he had privately advised a leading CUP member to grant semi-autonomy to the Yemen. It could not be ruled, like Konieh or Smyrna, owing to the special conditions appertaining to her, ibid.

But the Foreign Office's anti-Russian element in the Armenian question lost its main protagonist for Mallet, shortly to leave for Constantinople as the new Ambassador, was replaced by Eyre Crowe, as head of the Eastern Department. Norman alone had to face the full-scale attack launched by Marling and Fitzmaurice on the official attitude of the British Government. He repeated that unanimity amongst the Powers was indispensable for the success of British policy and therefore rejected Marling's suggestion to abandon unanimity, though he was ready to give up the other two stipulations of British policy: that the reform scheme must be accepted by the Porte without coercion and that the scheme should not go beyond that of 1895.

As could be expected Crowe put his weight on the Embassy's side. The German consent for regional military service and for a single united province under a Governor-General appointed by the Sultan with the Powers' consent, strengthened Crowe in his conviction that the German diagnosis was "false" and that an "earnest" effort should be made to make Germany "see reason" and adopt "a true view of the situation". Nevertheless, Crowe took the opportunity to present his interpretation of the preceding five years: Germany and Austria had, according to Crowe, "frustrated" reform in Macedonia because they thought Russia would take advantage of it. This was the only reason Crowe could find for the outbreak of the Young Turk Revolution and the wars which followed it.¹

When Russia and Germany eventually reached an agreement over the reform scheme, Crowe felt that Russia would make a mistake if she agreed to a sub-commission composed of an Ottoman, German and a Russian since it would be "Germany's game to demonstrate to the Turk that Germany is with him and Russia against him". He hoped that Germany would continue in the way she had done so far, since only in this way could "efficient" reforms be introduced.

1. Ibid. Minute by Norman, 7.9. Minute by Crowe, 23.9. Minute by Nicolson. Nicolson to Granville, 23.9.13, Pte., NP.369.

Later in September Russia and Germany reached an agreement by which they called upon the Porte to agree to two Inspectors-General for the two secteurs, to select and dismiss the high officials, to establish an elective council for each secteur consisting of Moslems and Christians in equal numbers, and to accept equality in all other offices and supervision by the Powers, through the Ambassadors.¹

Shortly after the agreement was reached, however, Talaat, now Minister of the Interior, suggested to Crawford and Graves, who were still serving as advisers to the Porte in the Finances and Customs Department that they take the office of Inspectors-General in the two secteurs for five years. Neither the two British officials, nor the Foreign Office were enthusiastic about the suggestion. Crowe saw it as a "device" inspired by Wangenheim to cause friction between Russia and England, and also to "water down" the reform scheme which had already been agreed. He felt that the idea was to replace Crawford and Graves by German officials in posts "where foreign influence is most important and has the maximum of effectiveness". Moreover, Crawford and Graves would be transferred to an area where they would "probably" be faced with difficulties, achieving nothing but friction with Russia.²

Nothing perhaps was more convincing, so far as the Foreign Office was concerned, than the fact that even the Tashnaks, who had broken off relations with the CUP once before and had then renewed them after the recent coup d'état, by the summer of 1913, were reported to have "very strained" relations with the CUP.³

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1. Granville to Grey, 24.9.13, tel. no. 165. Minute by Crowe. Marling to Grey, 26.9.13, tel. no. 486. Minutes, 27.9, ibid, no. 568
 2. Same to same, 7.10.13, tel. no. 497. Minutes, 8.10, ibid, no. 569. The Foreign Office was poorly impressed by the fact that Said Halim, the Grand Vizier, had no idea of Talaat's suggestion; see: same to same, 18.10.13, no. 876. Minute by Oliphant, 27.10. Graves, op. cit., pp.287-288.
 3. Grey to Bax-Ironside, 30.12.12, no. 47, op. cit. Molyneux-Seel to Lowther, 17.2.13, no. 3, in: Lowther to Grey, 13.3.13, no. 198, op. cit. Marling to Grey, 30.7.13, no. 684. Minute by Norman, 5.8, FO/371/1843.

The Kurds aroused the interest of Britain mainly as part of the Armenian question and Britain had rarely been interested in them as such. Although they bore considerable responsibility for the deteriorating conditions of the Armenians, the British Government always regarded the Porte as responsible for the lot of the Armenians. According to Lowther, after 1908 the Young Turks had been alarmed at the possibility of Kurds and Armenians combining in "a real 'fraternity'" and therefore pursued a policy of dividing them and setting them against each other. In 1913 "tendencies for autonomy" amongst the Kurds, which had "strong resemblance" to the recent anti-CUP movement amongst the Albanians were reported. The British Vice-Consul at Mosul was of the opinion that since this movement was encouraged by Russia it would "probably rise and wane according to the needs of Russian policy".¹

The Kurds, however, gained a reputation not only because of the Armenians but also as a result of the Nestorians' fear of being massacred by them. The British Vice-Consul predicted that if the present unrest continued the Nestorians might summon the Russians whose intervention the Kurds dreaded. Since there was little chance that the CUP would take "very strong" measures, the Foreign Office, or rather Mallet, concluded that this question needed "watching":

If Russia intervened in Kurdistan, it would be the signal for a general scramble. I imagine that our policy is to maintain the integrity of what remains of the Ottoman Empire both on account of India and of the great political question which would be raised by partition which would be difficult to settle without a European war. 2

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1. Lowther to Grey, 31.4.13, no. 375. Hony to Lowther, 3.4.13, no. 8, FO/371/1805.
 2. Lowther to Grey, 26.5.13, no. 468, Hony to Lowther, 27.4.13, no. 11. Minutes, 5, 6.

c) Britain's Policy and Interest in Mesopotamia

The concession Britain had made to the Porte in July 1912 with regard to participation in the Baghdad-Gulf Railway far from implied that she was giving up any interest in Mesopotamia. It meant only that priority was given to the Persian Gulf in the coming settlement over this region.¹ Britain not only kept a watchful eye on her interests in navigation and irrigation, but also cultivated a growing interest in the oil fields in the Mosul and Baghdad vilayets.

The question of Mesopotamian oil had become prominent when the Admiralty found oil important for fuelling. Hence the anxiety of the Foreign Office when it was discovered that the National Bank was negotiating with Shell, Deutsche Bank and the Asiatic Petroleum Company to establish a new company for the discovery and working of oil wells in the Ottoman Empire. Marling too regarded the action of the National Bank as "most disquieting" since such a move would make it difficult to keep working together with the French, and the only British financial house in the Ottoman Empire would thus go over to "the enemy's camp". Such a move would doubtless be misunderstood by the Russians. The Foreign Office had good reason to reject the National Bank's request for official support of the British Government. They would support only purely British groups like D'Arcy's.² The Foreign Office saw any combination with foreign elements as bound to cause "great detriment" to British interests. It was decided to make "every endeavour" to obtain the Mosul and Baghdad oil fields for the "purely" British Anglo-Persian Oil Co. Parker suggested that they offer £1,000,000 in cash to the Porte in return for a fifty years' concession

1. M.K. Chapman, Great Britain and the Baghdad Railway 1888-1914 (Northampton, Mass., 1948), *passim*.
2. Foreign Office to Admiralty, 13.9.12, very conf., FO/371/1486/36674. Marling to Maxwell, 18.9.12, Pte., *ibid*. Foreign Office to Babington-Smith, 28.9.12, *ibid*/40516. See also: M.Jack, "The Purchase of the British Government's Shares in the British Petroleum Co. 1912-1914", Past and Present, (1968), pp.139-168. M.R. Kent, British Government Interest in Middle East Oil Concessions, 1900-1925, (London, Ph.D., 1968).

to the Anglo-Persian Oil Co. This was regarded as worthy of consideration after the Balkan war was over.¹

The Interdepartmental Committee on the Question of Oil-fields in Mesopotamia and Persia also expressed considerable concern lest the Shell Company, predominantly Dutch, and the Deutsche Bank absorbed the Anglo-Persian Oil Company. This might bring the oil fields of Mesopotamia and Persia under largely German control. The Germans already controlled the Baghdad Railway, and were seeking the control of the navigation of the rivers: "If they also get the oil-concessions in Mesopotamia and Persia they cannot fail to acquire enormous political influence at British expense, in regions which are of supreme importance to India".² Although the Balkan War was still on the British decided to intimate to the Porte that they hoped that the concession for Mesopotamian oil-fields would not be given to concessionaires other than D'Arcy. The Foreign Office was also of the opinion that the Germans had no legal option to the Mesopotamian oilfields, therefore "nothing", claimed Mallet, could prevent the British Government from pressing for a concession for D'Arcy.³

In August 1912, however, the Turkish Petroleum Company was founded, in which, claimed Edwin Whittall, the Director, 75% of the capital was British. The Foreign Office doubted the truth of this and regarded the news as "serious".⁴

The struggle for the oil concession promised to be a hard one. The new company was regarded by the Embassy as a German one. The main reason for the

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1. Babington-Smith to Foreign Office, 9.10.12, ibid/42490. Minute by Parker, 15.11.12. Immediate and conf. Minutes by Maxwell and Mallet.
 2. Minute by Nicolson, 20.11.12. Meeting of the Interdepartmental Committee on the Question of Oil-fields in Mesopotamia and Persia, ibid/50815.
 3. Grey to Lowther, 6.12.12, tel. no. 1092. Foreign Office to India Office, 9.12.12, conf., ibid/51935. Lowther to Maxwell, 11.12.12, Pte., Minute by Mallet, 20.12, ibid.
 4. Memo. by Weakley, 27.12.12, in: Lowther to Grey, 28.12.12, no. 1125. conf. Minute by Parker, 1.1.13. Memo. communicated to Tewfik, 24.2.13, FO/371/1760/7820. Lowther to Grey, 1.3.13, tel. no. 115.

German success was the growing sympathy of the CUP for Germany in view of Britain's leanings towards the Balkan Allies and the German financial assistance given at a critical moment. Lowther concluded that the only leverage left to Britain in this struggle could be the concessions the Porte was asking for through Hakki. Certainly Lowther found it "unfortunate" that Whitall, who was on the board of Cassel's National Bank, should play the German game, though this might be a bluff.¹ Shevket maintained that since the German group would obtain the concession in any case by virtue of the Baghdad Railway concession, both groups should amalgamate. Mallet rejected this advice in view of the potential importance of oil, and was prepared to go as far as preventing the concession to either side, though it was important to the naval defence of the British Empire and to the Indian Railways.² But this was also Shevket's strategy, he warned Lowther that if both sides did not amalgamate neither would obtain it. He also established that no promise had been made to D'Arcy in 1909.³

Progress was made only in April when Shevket was prepared to give Britain the predominant share in the amalgamated company. This was acceptable to Mallet as the only way out. Lowther's suggestion to divide the oilfields by giving the Mosul vilayet to the German group and the Baghdad vilayet to the British one was regarded as "sphere system" by Norman and "objectionable in itself".⁴

But that was not the end of the story, since Nicolson much doubted whether Shevket was in a position to grant Britain predominance, and the German group was "so much stronger" than the British. Lowther also told

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1. Lowther to Grey, 10.3.13, no. 192. conf. Memo. communicated to Hakki, 18.3.13, *ibid*/11393. Lowther to Grey, 20.3.13, no. 227. conf. Minute by Norman, 27.3.
 2. Same to same, 26.3.13, tel. no. 165. Minute by Mallet, 27.3. Grey to Lowther, 28.3.13, tel. no. 157.
 3. Lowther to Grey, 31.3.13, no. 257. Minute by Mallet, 9.4.
 4. Same to same, 21.4.13, no. 336. Minute, 28.4. Same to same, 25.4.13, no. 349. Minute, 2.5.

Shevket that Article 22 of the Baghdad Railway Convention did not grant monopolies or privileges in the matter of mines. But Shevket refused to see the question except as a political one. Moreover, by British majority he meant not the preponderating share in the capital but rather a majority in the Board of the company. Lowther doubted if this was acceptable.¹

Thus the only way left open which Parker had earlier suggested, was to keep up pressure on Hakki. It was decided, however, not to add it as another condition for Britain's assent for the 4% Customs increase but to rely upon the Porte to make "arrangements" without delay which would ensure, through purely British Company, British control of the Mesopotamian oilfields.²

Meanwhile discussion started between the Anglo-Persian Oil Company and the more powerful rival "German" company. The Foreign Office, however, was still furious as to the "very unpatriotic" manner in which the National Bank had behaved.³ It was decided that great pressure should be put on them to induce them to come to a "proper" working agreement with the D'Arcy group. At the end of June the Foreign Office demanded that the National Bank follow the directions of the British Government in matters affecting British interests. By the end of 1913 the question was not yet settled and Parker told Hakki and Sassoon Effendi, the Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Commerce and Mines, that Britain would not recognise the claims of the new Turkish Petroleum Company if D'Arcy's claims were not satisfied.⁴

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1. Anglo-Persian Oil Company to Foreign Office, 29.4.13. Minutes, 2.5, ibid/20063. Lowther to Grey, 13.5.13, no. 407.
 2. Same to same, 21.5.13, tel. no. 238. Minute by Parker, BD.X.ii, no. 76.
 3. The bad experience that the Foreign Office had with the National Bank deterred the British Government from supporting any other bank when new initiatives came up for opening a new bank. The Foreign Office was also deterred by the "unpromising" future of the Ottoman Empire. Babington-Smith to Grey, 11.6.13, FO/371/1826/26928. Minutes, 14.6. Lowther to Grey, 20.6.13, tel. no. 261. conf. Minutes. Mallet to Grey, 5.11.13, tel. no. 547. Minutes, 6.11. Minutes by Crowe and Grey, 30.3.14, FO/341/2127/14256. Waugh to Tyrrell, 16.7.14. Minutes, 20.7, ibid/32879
 4. Board of Trade to Foreign Office, 20.6.13. Secret Minute by Parker, 21.6, FO/371/1761/28398. Greenway to Foreign Office, 23.6.13. Minute by Parker, 24.6, ibid/28805. Lowther to Grey, 24.6.13, tel. no. 294. Minute by Mallet. Mallet to Babington-Smith, 30.6.13, ibid/29070. Minute by Parker, 1.12.13, ibid/54440.

As late as March 1914 the Porte formed an Ottoman group for the exploitation of oil in the vilayets of Mosul, Baghdad and Basra. An urgent representation was made to Hakki reminding him that the Porte was already pledged to D'Arcy. Britain would not be satisfied with less than 50% of any company formed. If Britain would not be satisfied she would refuse to agree to any of the monopolies asked by the Porte. The Porte was already reminded that Britain had made on 29 July 1913 "stringent reservations" regarding the connection between the Customs increase and the oil question. It was also hoped that Britain would obtain preferential rights with regard to Nejd, "where the establishment of a foreign syndicate would create serious embarrassment in existing conditions." Mallet was instructed to tell the Porte "categorically" that if D'Arcy would not obtain at least 50% Britain would be compelled to break off all negotiations with Hakki, and reconsider her consent to the Customs increase and monopolies.¹

Fortunately both the Porte and the Germans were conciliatory. Thus on 19 March 1914 an agreement was signed which divided the interests - 50% for D'Arcy, and 25% each for the Deutsche Bank and the Anglo-Saxon Petroleum Company. It was hoped now that the concession would be given to this Anglo-German group in the Mesopotamian vilayets. Four days later Mallet and Wangenheim made a joint application to the Porte for oil production in Mosul and Baghdad vilayets.²

But the Porte was still unhappy about the monopoly desired by the British, because then the French would ask for monopoly of Syria and the Russians for the Eastern vilayets. The Porte was ready to give all the wells which had already

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1. Mallet to Grey, 11.3.14, tel. no. 157. Minute, 12.3. Parker to Hakki, 12.3.14, FO/371/2120/10926. Grey to Mallet, 11.3.14, tel. no. 133, (written by Crowe).
 2. Mallet to Grey, 11.3.14, tel. no. 159. Arrangements for Fusion of the Interests in Turkish Petroleum Co., 19.3.14, Minute by Crowe, 20.3, ibid, no. 214.

been discovered, and permis de recherche in the rest of the vilayet. Talaat promised that this was only a matter of form and any other companies that applied would be refused. Only at this stage was Britain satisfied.¹ Finally, after the Foreign Office suspected Said Halim of deliberately delaying the fulfillment of the agreed Anglo-German arrangements, the Porte agreed to leave all the wells to the new Company. But the negotiations with the Porte had not finished when the war started.²

The National Bank of Turkey also threatened the long established British interests in the Mesopotamian Rivers navigation. Here too the Bank was prepared to take part in a group consisting of Lynch, the Deutsche Bank and a Belgian group which would negotiate with the Porte for the formation of an Ottoman Company to take over the steamers owned by the Porte, Lynch and the Deutsche Bank. The Foreign Office anticipated the opposition of the Board of Trade and the India Office since they regarded the Rivers concession as essential for maintaining competitive rates against the Baghdad Railway. The sensitivity of the Russians was also brought up as an argument against this amalgamation. The British felt that they were on safe ground since, maintained Parker, Lynch held their rights of navigation through the British Government. Nicolson was annoyed when he learnt of the National Bank's activities, for they were always initiating projects unfavourable to British interests. More realistically, Grey held that Britain could never obtain "purely" British control over the navigation, and a majority for British interests should be "safer".³

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1. Mallet to Grey, 17.4.14, tel. no. 224. Grey to Mallet, 20.4.14, tel. no. 202. Mallet to Grey, 18.4.14, tel. no. 248. Minute by Parker, 21.4.
 2. Same to same, 9.6.14, tel. no. 328. Minute by Parker and Crowe, 10.6. Same to same, 30.6.14, tel. no. 393. Minute by Crowe, 1.7. Anglo-Persian Oil Co. to Foreign Office, 2.11.14. Minutes, 6.11, ibid/66612.
 3. Babington-Smith to Foreign Office, 21.10.12. conf. Minutes, 24.10, FO/371/1494/44554.

But since Lynch was now suspected of trying to co-operate with the Deutsche Bank and of "playing false" with the Foreign Office, the latter seemed to support the Board of Trade's idea that the three additional steamers which they had asked from the Porte for navigation on the Rivers should be given to an independent company like Lord Inchcape's, the company that eventually obtained the concession. Parker warned that any co-operation with the Deutsche Bank was "surely a complete reversal" of British policy with regard to the Baghdad Railway: "we should be putting our heads into a noose".¹

The India Office expressed concern that the joint activities of the National Bank and the Deutsche Bank might "seriously" alter the situation in the region to the detriment of British interests. The India Office was therefore anxious that the Porte be pressed to reply to the British Memo of the previous July. They felt that if the settlement of the Mesopotamian and Gulf questions were delayed until the war was over then the Porte might be "more impracticable than ever". Both the Foreign Office and the Embassy agreed that it would be more difficult to deal with the Porte in the future on these questions, but as long as the war was on no pressure could be exercised on the Porte. Parker was not too worried because he felt that the much desired Customs increase would afford "a suitable opportunity" as the Porte would badly need funds. Parker suggested that if the oil concession were really important then the British Government ought to help D'Arcy advance a loan to the Porte in anticipation of their consent.²

Although the Balkan war was not yet finished it was the CUP Government who a few days after their coup d'état, decided to bring the Mesopotamian and Gulf questions to a successful settlement. For this purpose they decided

1. India Office to Foreign Office, 1.11.12. Minute by Parker, 2.11, ibid/46326.
2. India Office to Foreign Office, 23.11.12, Minutes, 3.12, ibid/50189. Lowther to Grey, 23.12.12, no. 1100. Minute by Parker, 30.12.

to send the ex-Grand Vizier Hakki to London, but the aim of his mission was at the beginning not very clear to the Embassy or to the Foreign Office. Lowther's information was that Hakki would discuss the Baghdad Railway and resume the negotiations for the preliminaries for peace. Norman thought that the account in The Times which maintained that Hakki's mission was to detach Britain from the Concert of Europe by concessions in the Persian Gulf was "more comprehensible". Nicolson expected, however, that Hakki would be anxious to obtain the 4% Customs duties increase.¹

Lowther and Fitzmaurice were divided as to Hakki's qualifications and character. Lowther described his mission as an expression of the "mania" the Ottomans had for special Ambassadors and Commissioners. He admitted that he was clever and knew the subject of the Persian Gulf, but he was reputed to be pro-German as he was personally responsible for giving the Germans the Alexandretta concession in return for their concession in the southern end of the Baghdad Railway. Fitzmaurice was also sure that Hakki's mission included not only the settlement of the 4% Customs increase but also the peace negotiations. He was much less appreciative of Hakki than Lowther: "He is a windbag and chatterbox who loves good cheer of any kind". Nevertheless, he believed that Hakki would accept anything in order to obtain the 4% Customs increase. He envisaged that Parker would have an "easy task" with Hakki compared with Djavid in 1910 and he expected him to give up Katr, Bahrein, etc.: "He [Parker] can play with him as a cat does with its mouse." His opinion of the Ottoman Empire was indeed low:

As regards the Persian Gulf [he wrote to Tyrrell on 17 February] the position has so changed that in agreeing to gain the 4% against the desiderata in our last note of July 1912 we are conferring an unesteemable boon on the Turks. The Arabs down there are almost certain very soon to eliminate the Turks and the latter will have to be grateful if, at the Arab request we refuse to occupy Basra, Baghdad, etc., instead of pottey holes like Koweit, Katar, etc. 2

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1. Lowther to Grey, 10.2.13, tel. no. 79. BD.X.ii. no. 59. Same to same, 12.2.13, tel. no. 86. Minutes, 13.2, FO/371/1788.
 2. Lowther to Nicolson, 13.2.13, Pte., op. cit. Fitzmaurice to Tyrrell, 13.2.13, Pte., op. cit. Same to same, 17.2.13, Pte., op. cit.

It was, however, soon apparent that Hakki's chief mission was connected with the Persian Gulf and Mesopotamian questions, though he took a sporadic part in the peace negotiations. On 26 February Mallet presented to Hakki a Memo concerning Britain's "exceptional" rights of navigation in the Mesopotamian Rivers. But meanwhile it was reported that the new Company for the Rivers navigation had been established. Grey thought that Hakki should be informed that Britain would not accept such an arrangement since the concession was given not to Lynch but to the British Government. As expected the Russian Consul at Basra enquired about the new company. Sazonov had already complained "bitterly" of it and was expected to renew his protest. This, however, suited the aims of British policy very well. Amalgamation of interests was regarded as a defeat for Britain, because this could lead to the complete exclusion of British navigation from these Rivers.¹

But it was the Germans themselves who suggested a good way out of the impasse on the question of the navigation to the British. Kühlmann, the German Charge in London, suggested that if the British Government agreed to the Baghdad Railway Company building themselves the Baghdad-Basra line, Germany would agree that the section to the Gulf be postponed, that two British directors join the Board of the Konia-Basra Railway, that no German subject make any claim to participate in the Rivers navigation, and that the Shatt-el-Arab be open to give all flags access to Basra. Nicolson regarded the "free hand" the Germans were ready to give to Britain in the navigation as "the most satisfactory" feature of the German suggestion and hoped that no objection would be raised to the German wish to build the Baghdad-Basra line as long as they did not continue it beyond Basra and two British directors were on the Board of the Germany Company. This was agreed after the British refused to indemnify the Germans for giving up the Basra-Gulf line. Grey

1. Mallet to Hakki, 26.2.13, ibid, no. 60. Lowther to Grey, 2.3.13, tel. no. 119. Foreign Office to the Euphrates and Tigris Navigation Company, 10.3.13, FO/371/1790/9777. Foreign Office to India Office, Foreign Office to Board of Trade, 26.3.13, ibid/10818. Lowther to Grey, 24.3.13, no.233. Minutes, 2.4. Foreign Office to India Office, 9.4.13, ibid/14674. Memo. respecting the Navigation of the Tigris and Euphrates, 24.4.13 by R.W.Brant and E.Parkes, ibid/ O'Beirne to Grey, 17.5.13, tel.no.194, ibid, nos.74,75.

pointed out to the German Ambassador that Germany had already been indemnified in March 1911 by the Porte in Alexandretta where she had been granted the railway branch to Osmaniëh and the construction of the port.¹

Since this was favourable to Britain it was now only necessary to inform Germany and the Porte that Lynch was not authorised to negotiate for the British Government and that he should be treated with "great circumspection" because of his proved lack of loyalty. This was the British attitude although it had been admitted in a meeting at the Board of Trade, with Parker and Hirtzel present, that Lynch's was the only firm with experience. On 16 May the British Government scored its first victory when they signed The River Navigation Declaration ad referendum with Hakki. Parker expressed the feelings of the Foreign Office when he wrote that this was more than ever expected. Kuhlmann, however, opposed the use of the word "monopoly". Parker replied that monopoly was the "essence of the whole thing" just as they, the Germans, had monopoly in the Baghdad Railway. Probably this debate led Parker to issue a warning: "It seems very desirable to tie the German down as soon as possible to their undertaking about the river navigation, less they should whittle it away."² However, the final agreement between the Porte and Inchcape concerning the navigation was signed on 12 December after Parker had to remind Sassoon Effendi and Hakki that it was owing to British navigation since the reign of Queen Elizabeth that the Porte had power in Mesopotamia nowadays.³

Great progress was achieved meanwhile in the negotiations with Hakki on the Shatt-el-Arab question, where the Porte accepted the British demand that the two chief officials on the Navigation Commission be British subjects recommended by the British Government, that Sheikh of Mohammara entrust his

1. Grey to Goschen, 3.5.13, no. 152, ibid, no. 65. Minute by Parker, 7.5.13, ibid, no. 66. Lowther to Grey, 22.3.11., no. 183, conf. BD.X.ii, no. 23.
2. Minute by Parker, 9.5.13, ibid, no. 69. Minute by Parker, op. cit./21957. L. Smith to Grey, 16.5.13, Minute by Parker, 17.5. op. cit./22525. Minute by Parker, 21.5.13, ibid, no. 78.
3. Minute by Parker, 3.12.13, ibid, no. 183. Concession pour la Navigation sur le Tigre et l'Euphrates, 12.12.13, ibid, no. 188.

interests to a British Commissioner and that the frontier be demarcated according to Britain's demands. With regard to Koweit it was agreed that it was "un caza autonome de l'Empire ottoman" because no agreement could be reached over the terms "suzerainty" and "sovereignty". Britain rejected the Porte's claim to regulate the succession in the Sheikh's family because it amounted to Ottoman interference and because Britain's policy was to recognise only de facto rulers. But as a matter of fact Britain did not give up her predominant position there as she kept her 1899 agreement with the Sheikh, according to which the Sheikh would not receive foreign representatives without Britain's consent.* The Porte was evicted, according to the Hakki-Mallet agreement, from Bahrein and El-Katr. In exchange Britain had agreed to give the Porte the island of Zakhnuniya and a small strip of coast. Thus the safeguards required by the Government of India had been secured and Britain could undertake not to annexe Bahrein.¹

The question of the renunciation of the veto by the Ottoman Empire on the borrowing powers of Egypt was a more complicated one. Hakki considered it as the most difficult question of all since the Porte could not abandon its right without parliamentary consent. But this was always Britain's "principal" condition of her assent to the 4% Customs increase, Parker pointed out. Hakki suggested that the Porte might agree to one "very large" loan to be raised in instalments over a number of years. Parker repeated that nothing short of complete renunciation would be accepted by Britain.²

The Ottomans wanted British consent for the Customs increase from 11% to 15% ad valorem not only for seven years, but for an indefinite period,

1. Report on Baghdad Railway and Persian Gulf. The Negotiations with Hakki. Secret, 3.5.13 by Mallet and Hirtzel, *ibid.*, p.114 ff. Minute by Parker, 8.7.14, FO/371/2136/31036. Busch, *op. cit.*, pp. 336-340.
2. Minute by Parker, 13.5.13. Minute by Vansittart, 14.5, *ibid.* no. 71.
- *. see: J.B. Kelly, "Salisbury, Curzon and the Kuwait Agreement of 1899", Studies in International History, eds. K. Bourne and D.C. Watt, (1967), pp. 249-290.

consent for the substitution, in due course, of a specific tariff for an ad valorem one, agreement to the temettu tax, the abolition of foreign Post Offices, which caused a "serious" loss of revenue to the Porte, and the British Government to agree "to study" the possibility of abolishing the Capitulations. Concerning the last two questions there was little enthusiasm in the Embassy and in the Foreign Office. Parker recommended, however, not to return a "flat refusal" to the Porte on the Capitulations question since it had been so "accommodating" in the negotiations, and in any case Britain was asked only to "study" the question. As to the Post Offices Lowther also advised against concession, not even on principle, as the Ottoman Post Offices were still unreliable.¹

Though there were still difficulties the British Government was satisfied with the almost completed negotiations. Russia and France were informed that the settlement was necessary since nothing could be done to prevent the Baghdad Railway from reaching Basra. The chief aim of British policy was to safeguard the status quo in the Persian Gulf, and to safeguard British trade on the trade-route from the Gulf to Asia Minor, through the two British directors and by keeping navigation in British hands.²

But Lorimer, the Consul-General and Resident at Baghdad, was not as enthusiastic as the Foreign Office about what he called the "imprudent" exchange of railway interests for navigation advantages: "to me it seems probable that railway will kill navigation ... prime interests here are irrigation and then the railway; and future of navigation, especially if the rivers are tapped by canals is altogether problematical". Mallet agreed with Lorimer's view and concluded that the German renunciation of their navigation rights should not be overrated. Grey, however, maintained that

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1. Report on Baghdad Railway and Persian Gulf, 3.5.13, op. cit. Minute by Parker, 5.5.13. Lowther to Grey, 15.5.13, tel. no. 233. Same to same, 17.5.13, no. 436. Minute by Vansittart, 21.5. Same to same, 15.5.13, tel. no. 232.
 2. Grey to Bertie, 21.5.13, no. 322 (also to O'Beirne), ibid, no. 77. Grey to Goschen, 23.5.13, no. 165, ibid, no. 79.

as long as this did not affect the region south of Basra, Britain would not claim participation. But it was soon apparent that Germany intended to obtain a 5% or 10% share in the navigation company for the Hamburg-America Line and some representation in the Shatt-el-Arab Conservation Commission for her large shipping interests. Grey had to explain to the Germans that the British claim for monopoly in the navigation was part of a "compromise" in which Britain had given up all claim for participation and control on the Baghdad-Basra section. Grey was also uncompromising on the question of the Shatt-el-Arab Navigation Commission. He maintained that it was an Ottoman institution and the Porte had applied to Britain for someone to act under her authority, just as the Porte had asked Germany for an expert to reform their army. If Germany claimed representation other nations would also demand it and the Commission might become international instead of Ottoman.¹

The final British Draft Memo was presented to Hakki on 5 June. Parker's interview with Hakki on the 11th made it clear that both sides were near final agreement over most of the controversial questions. The slight objections raised by the Porte were received with great satisfaction in the Foreign Office, after Nicolson had during the negotiations expressed his hesitations as to real authority which Hakki had carried with him. But it was agreed that the settlement was "eminently satisfactory" even by the India Office and the Government of India.²

The final agreement concerning the Mesopotamian and Gulf questions had been signed on 29 July, but Grey reminded Tewfik that the main Ottoman desideratum, the 4% Customs increase was dependent upon the issue of Imperial firman respecting the borrowing powers of Egypt, the signature of draft convention on railways in the Asiatic provinces, and that "very great importance"

1. Lowther to Grey, 3.6.13, tel. no. 256. Minutes, 4.6. Grey to Goschen, 2.6.13, no. 177, *ibid.*, no. 86. Minute by Parker, 7.6, *ibid.*, no. 91. Foreign Office Minutes, 10.3.14, FO/371/2122/17902.
2. *Ibid.* Minute by Mallet, Nicolson to Lowther, 17.3.13, Pte., *op. cit.* Same to same, 15.4.13, Pte., *op. cit.* Same to same, 27.5.13, Pte., *op. cit.*

was attached by Britain to a satisfactory settlement of the Mesopotamian oil concession.¹ Also the Anglo-Ottoman agreement could not come into force before the end of the Ottoman-German negotiations, which had not yet started as Djavid was still negotiating with the French.²

The final agreement with the Porte was signed by Parker and Halik on 24 July 1914. It was facilitated by the Anglo-German agreement of 15 June 1914 and the Porte's readiness to meet British claims in oil, irrigation and local lines to serve as feeders for the Rivers navigation. Britain's consent to the customs increase and to Ottoman monopolies, had as its preconditions concessions from the Porte.³ Parker, as the main sponsor of this agreement, naturally saw it as a great success.⁴ He regarded it as a political as well as a commercial achievement, especially as the commercial progress of the Ottoman Empire was until now handicapped by political difficulties: "Turkey has for the first time secured a large and certain prospect of financial assistance for the development of her own resources." But, as Djavid the Minister of Finance stated, the Porte really wanted not just a free hand in the question of the Customs administration but complete economic independence. Said Halim informed Beaumont, the British Charge, that the present situation in which the Porte had to go around "begging permission" to change various financial arrangements was "intolerable". But this was much more than Britain was ready to give.

Parker, who saw the agreement with the Porte also as a great boon to the Ottomans, regarded this demand for economic freedom as "most unreasonable". But he only represented his Government's view. Crawford encouraged the Foreign Office in refusing this as he felt that the Porte was bluffing.

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1. Gray to Tewfik, 29.7.13, ibid., no. 124. Anglo-Turkish Agreement, 29.7.13, ibid.
 2. Minute by Parker, 15.10.13, FO/371/1817/46981.
 3. Gray to Mallet, 31.5.14, tel. no. 245. Gray to Beaumont, 19.7.14, tel. no. 315, ibid., no. 260.
 4. Later Parker apologised for not achieving more on the ground that Gray was "hampered" by the existence of the Convention of 1903. Parker, op. cit., pp. 523-524.

What they really wanted was greater freedom to deal with matters like contraband. This view was intimated to Hakki. Said Halim could not understand why Crawford had underrated the importance of the Porte's will to have a free hand in financial matters. The agreement thus remained unfulfilled with the outbreak of the European War.¹

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To see the Mesopotamian and Gulf agreements in a correct political context it is worth examining Britain's attitude on Mesopotamia in terms of a political or an economic sphere of influence. As for the Persian Gulf there was no doubt that Britain regarded it as her "sphere of influence", though she preferred to call it "maintaining the status quo". The question of Basra arose in the Foreign Office when the Arab tribes on both sides of the Tigris (from Gart to Gurna) begged "protection and assistance" from the British Consul. The motive of their action was a conflict with the Ottoman authorities about their land contracts. Crowe, the British Consul, replied that he could not encourage them since this would mean interference in Ottoman internal affairs but he warned against alienating them as this would be a detraction from British "local interests" in view of the possible future "political action" of these tribes. Mallet expanded on this:

My point is that it will be a pity to alienate finally these powerful Sheikhs, who will turn to some other country. We are always talking of our prestige and interests in Mesopotamia. We do not know what may happen in that part of the world during the next few years - there have been talks of an Arab revolt and declaration of independence. It is a question whether without committing ourselves, we might not find some way of showing the Arabs that we are not entirely indifferent to their interests.

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1. Draft of Despatch dated August 1914. (Conf. 24.7.14) to HM's Ambassador at Constantinople. Reviewing the course of Negotiations and Agreements concluded in 1913 and 1914 regarding Affairs of Turkey and the Persian Gulf. FO/371/2125/32458. Beaumont to Grey, 21.7.14, tel. no. 445, ibid, no. 261. Same to same, 24.7.14, tel. no. 453, ibid, no. 263. Grey to Beaumont, 27.7.14, tel. no. 326, ibid, no. 264. Parker to Hakki, 25.7.14, ibid/34201. Beaumont to Grey, 29.7.14, tel. no. 46. Grey to Lichnowsky, 16.6.14, Anglo-German Convention, ibid, no. 249.

Grey and Nicolson agreed that the matter should be mentioned to Hakki unofficially since in any case the Porte was already suspicious about Britain's connections with these sheikhs. A little later, however, when the Foreign Office learned that the sheikh who had contacted Crowe had killed the Porte's representative, had seized the Government's land and did not intend to pay taxes, Grey himself telegraphed to Lowther that this new information put the whole matter in a different light and did not justify Crowe's earlier telegrams.¹

This, however, should be seen in the light of the promises the CUP had made to the Arabs in the provinces of Jerusalem, Syria, Aleppo, Basra, Baghdad and Mosul, allowing them to use Arabic in schools, courts, etc. In the Foreign Office and Embassy these reforms were received with scepticism, on the grounds that the Arabs had no confidence in the CUP.² But what was true about Basra was not true about Mosul as far as British interests went. In February 1913 Hony, the Vice-Consul, was bold enough to suggest the extension of British interest in South Mesopotamia in the Direction of Mosul since in his opinion the Ottoman Empire was about to face gradual disintegration. These fragments of the former Empire would "naturally" fall into the hands of those Powers whose interests in them were greatest. Mosul was not yet included in any "sphere of influence". He felt therefore that Britain should strengthen her influence by the teaching of English and by assisting a British group to secure concession for the Rivers navigation up to Mosul. Everything should also be done by the Board of Trade to ensure the coming of British capital for the exploitation of the oil-fields before the Germans stepped in. The Foreign Office said that everything had been done on the commercial side and that more

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1. Lowther to Grey, 14.3.13, tel. no. 145. Crowe to Lowther, 12.3.13, Secret. Minutes, 15.3. Same to same, 22.3.13, tel. no. 157. Secret. Grey to Lowther, 25.3.13, tel. no. 152.
 2. Lowther to Grey, 21.4.13, no. 332. Minute by Norman, 28.4, FO/371/1799.

could be done in the teaching of English, but the Foreign Office certainly did not yet share Hony's confidence that Britain ought to start the struggle for Mosul.¹

Lorimer at Baghdad was somewhat more modest when he discussed "foreign economic spheres of influence". If this question should arise British influence should extend from the Persian Gulf to Samarah on the Tigris and to Hit on the Euphrates, in order to include in it all the projected irrigation schemes, which he considered as the most important for the future of Mesopotamia if not for the Ottoman Empire itself. Samarah, moreover, was a spot of Indian Moslem (Shia) pilgrimage. The addition of Ana to these regions would make it identical in extent to the vilayets of Basra and Baghdad. He also suggested the inclusion of Mosul on account of oil interests, though it might be seen as an "exaggerated" claim. Lorimer further recommended that Britain should sacrifice "minor" interests in other parts of the Ottoman Empire, British inspectors, and political and commercial influence in order to secure the "consolidation" of the British position in Mesopotamia and the Gulf. Lowther accepted Lorimer's views as to "spheres of economic interests" in view of the "desperate" financial position of the Porte which might bring with it international control and the division of the Empire into such "economic spheres".

In the Foreign Office the reaction was divided. Norman "much disliked" the idea of limiting what he called British "enterprise" in the Asiatic provinces. Nevertheless, he agreed that "some day" Britain might accept what Lorimer had suggested, but "do not let us propose it". Since this came up in the midst of the negotiations with Hakki, Norman thought that Britain had "enough" to do in consolidating her position by the negotiations with Hakki. Maxwell, on the other hand, felt that: "If there is going to be a partition of Turkey in Asia this is the part that we should keep our eyes on."²

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1. Hony to Lowther, 20.2.13, no. 4, conf. in: Lowther to Grey, 27.3.13, no. 245. Minutes, 1.4.
 2. Lowther to Grey, 26.4.14, no. 354, conf. (Lorimer to Lowther, 25.4.) Minutes, 1.5, FO/371/1816.

The question of the future of Mesopotamia was again prominent when it became known to Lorimer that the General Post Office had agreed in principle to the abolition of the British Post Offices in the Ottoman Empire. The British Post Offices in Baghdad and Basra were, however, under the Government of India. Lorimer suggested that in view of the "possible ultimate dissolution of Turkey and formation meanwhile of foreign spheres of interests" Britain should "most jealously" maintain her establishments in Mesopotamia like the Post Offices, the military detachment in the Residency and its stationnaire. Lorimer was confident that Britain should even increase her establishments in Mesopotamia, where her stake was "most large" and her claims "greatest". Further he was sure that the "ocular proofs" of the antiquity of the British connection with Mesopotamia such as steam navigation, post and telegraph and almost all other signs of civilisation, which had been established by Britain, entitled her to claim Mesopotamia as a "sphere of influence".

Surprisingly, in comparison with the Foreign Office's reaction in March and even early May, the Foreign Office rejected Lorimer's view. Parker, as a protagonist of the agreements, warned that if Britain adopted the policy of "spheres of influence", all the other Powers would do likewise in other parts of the Ottoman Empire, e.g. France in Syria. Maxwell, who only some four weeks earlier agreed with Lorimer's view, now considered it "surely a very parochial view" which did not require an answer. The most surprising was Mallet's minute: "There is a strong tendency on the part of our Consuls to talk of spheres of influences which if it continues must be discouraged."¹ The change in his views since March should probably be attributed to the much greater danger of creation of "spheres of interests" which started from May onwards as a result of the Russian policy in the Armenian question.

Lorimer, however, continued to believe in a new approach to Mesopotamia. He again tried to convince the Foreign Office that the Young Turk failure must bring with it a complete change in Britain's policy:

1. Lowther to Gray, 25.6.13, tel. no. 301, ibid., no. 104. (Minutes, FO/371/1817).

I trust that the momentousness of the parting of the ways which has been reached in the history of the Middle East will be held to justify remarks [on the Porte's future]. They perhaps go beyond the ordinary scope of a local representative, but they are made deliberately and with a full sense of responsibility after three years' careful reflection.

He suggested that if the Foreign Office took the view that the Ottoman Empire was going to last, then "some mixture and internationalisation of interests" was desirable in order to avoid one power taking political responsibility. But if the Foreign Office felt that the Ottoman Empire "must" break up and Mesopotamia had to become a British "sphere of influence", then the present "intrusion" of foreign interests other than British south of Mosul was "fraught with grave future inconvenience".

Lorimer clearly challenged here the recent agreement with Hakkı which left to Germany the railway to Basra. Parker, with Crowe's consent, rejected Lorimer's reservations. He maintained that nothing more could be done over the Baghdad Railway in view of the German concession of 1903. As to navigation Lorimer overlooked the fact that the projected Railway was distant from the Tigris, and that the steamers would serve a different district. Parker hoped that careful storage would prevent navigation becoming useless. Moreover, he strongly rejected Lorimer's opinion that "the parting of the ways" which involved the intrusion of foreign interests southwards of Mosul was now taking place. The "intrusion" had already occurred in 1898 and 1903, and the British Government could not prevent it, but now hoped to arrest it at Basra. Above all Lorimer should be informed that Britain upheld the integrity of the Ottoman Empire.¹

Meanwhile, in Basra Seyyid Talib was inciting the population to rebel against the CUP Government unless the latter conceded their demand for autonomy.

1. Extract from Consul-General Lorimer's Baghdad Summary for July 1913, conf. Lorimer to Marling, 4.8.13, no. 845. Marling to Grey, 7.9.13, no. 774. Minutes, 22.9, FO/371/1845.

He blamed the Young Turks for betraying Islam, for selling the country as had happened in Bulgaria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and for encouraging the Zionists to establish an independent state in Palestine. In the Foreign Office the "violent" language used by Talib was dismissed as it was not going to lead to "any important movement".¹

The British Consuls at Baghdad and Mosul were not confronted in their districts with personalities as violent as Seyyid Talib, but they were convinced that the local populations were absolutely unprepared for self-government. "I think," Lorimer wrote to Hony, "that if the Turkish Government falls short of the ideal, an Arab Government would fall even shorter." Hony "entirely" agreed with Lorimer, as he wrote to Marling:

Societies are being formed, agitations are being fomented, to save this people from the Turk. What is more needed is someone to save them from themselves. The Government is no doubt responsible for many abuses, but it must be acknowledged that it is the people themselves who are most ready to avail themselves for opportunities thus afforded. The corrupt members of the Administrative Council are local Arabs. The most corrupt members of the Department of Justice are local Arabs.

The notable of Mosul sits in his reception room and growls about the hopelessness of the Turkish Government; but his agent is squeezing the last penny out of ten or twenty wretched villages, and his son, an official in the law courts or the Public Works Department, is growing rich by bribes or embezzlement, while he himself, as a member of the Council, is doing pretty well, in the same line. In conclusion, it would seem that European control is the only real hope for the country, and I believe that the majority of honest and intelligent men in Mosul realise this and desire it. 2

But the Foreign Office was haunted by considerations other than those which preoccupied the Consuls:

We shall see [Nicolson wrote to Cartwright on 8 July 1913] the liquidation, should it of necessity come to pass, of the Turkish succession in Asia a far more delicate and difficult performance than that which has recently taken place in Europe. It will not be the small countries like Balkan States which will be filled with the desire of acquiring rich provinces,

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1. Crowe to Marling, 30.8.13, no. 52. Marling to Grey, 25.9.13, no. 819. Minute by Norman, 8.10.
 2. Hony to Marling, 18.6.13, no. 18. Marling to Grey, 14.7.13, no. 623. Minutes, 24.7, FO/371/1805.

but it will be the Great Powers who will be scrambling to obtain their share of the spoils. We shall certainly do our best to co-operate in any measure which may help in maintaining Turkish rule surrounded naturally by all limitations and safeguards for the welfare of the subordinate races. I think that a very long time will elapse before we have done with these matters and they will afford us many months if not years of very anxious work and anxiety. 1

* * *

About this time, on 1 July, Lowther left Constantinople for good. He left the Ottoman capital after serving as an Ambassador in one of the most crucial periods in Ottoman history. He was, during his mission, confronted by circumstances no other British Ambassador accredited to that Empire had ever experienced. Whilst beforehand British Ambassadors had faced the problem of how to tackle the Sultan-Caliph as the only source of government, Lowther was confronted with a number of bodies: the CUP, the army, the Porte and the Parliament. It would be too easy a task to state that Lowther had fallen short of a "great opportunity". For when he arrived on 30 July 1908 Britain's reputation was at its peak. Furthermore, one is not satisfied with Ryan's defence of his former chief, who claimed that this judgment was "unjust" since the Young Turks were "chauvinistic, and no British diplomat was likely to make much headway against them".² This kind of apologia, however, could still serve as the starting point for the understanding of Lowther's political views. For Lowther did have strong views as to what should be the character of the new Ottoman regime. As a man who served before in Constantinople, he thought of the Ottoman Empire in terms of "dictatorship" so long as Abdul-Hamid

1. Nicolson to Cartwright, 8.7.13, Pte., HP. 366. Platt argues that Britain had her "eyes on Mesopotamia in any future formal or informal partition" and that this was the chief motive in her concession-hunting policy. This view is incorrect in view of the Foreign Office's attitude. Platt, op. cit., pp. 195-197.

2. Ryan, op. cit., pp. 70-71.

was on the saddle.¹ The kind of regime he found after the Revolution filled him with deep suspicion and doubts both as to the ideas and the kind of leadership which had replaced that of Abdul-Hamid. He treated both with great mistrust. He did not believe from the very beginning that the Young Turks could live up to their motto of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity as the Moslem could not be expected to drop suddenly his Islamic notions, and embrace the Christian, up till now considered for generations both as an enemy and as an inferior. Nor did he have any trust in the CUP's leaders. Here, it seems, Ryan's judgment was correct: "It must be admitted that he lacked elasticity. A rich man and very much of a grand seigneur, he was apt to look down on upstarts playing at statesmanship."² Indeed, very soon he posed himself as an enemy of the CUP since its members refused to come into the open and to assume the role of a parliamentary party. It is ironical that Lowther whilst never believing that the Young Turks could rule constitutionally, now expected them to come into the open. He never realised that their inability to govern the country was the very reason why they always remained an 'occult body'. Once he realised that the CUP would not take part in leading the country towards a new period of constitutional regime, he started to look around for an explanation for that mystery. Not finding any reasonable one he swallowed the imaginary one supplied to him by his 'alter ego', Fitzmaurice. His incredible ignorance as to both the nature of Freemasonry and Ottoman Jewry supplied him with an all too easy but entirely erroneous solution. Furthermore, his belief that since the Jews hated Russia, they must have been anti-British too and accessories to Germany's policy to destroy the Entente, can only be described as pure fantasy.³

1. Lowther to Grey, 4.8.08, Pte., op. cit.

2. Ryan, op. cit., pp 70-71.

3. Bullard, op. cit., p. 64. Lowther to Hardinge, 29.5.10, Pte., p.6, LP.

Whatever Lowther's explanation as to the nature of the CUP, he was, at least, proved right as far as their slogans on Liberty, Equality and Fraternity were concerned. His second prophecy was also proved true, namely their lack of leadership. Thus nothing more remained to him to do except to report to the Foreign Office on the constant failure of that body where the extremists had gained the upper hand. Shevket's murder was for him the end of any hope that the moderates might prevail. "I much fear," he wrote in his last letter to Nicolson, "that now we are in for a period when the inner circle, which is of course the violent section will make its power and influence felt ... They will make mistakes and endless mistakes, and will probably eventually hang themselves if given enough rope ..."¹ Lowther, as an unceasing enemy of any Jacobinism, whether in Revolutionary France, China or Portugal or Young Turkey, was in a hurry to denounce the CUP's extremists, though the French bore but little similarity to their Young Turks so-called disciples in their political or social views. In truth, Lowther's strong antipathy to the CUP had nothing to do with his so-called failure to exploit the "great opportunity" to win over the Young Turks. No evidence whatever exists to support any argument that either the Foreign Office, or Lowther by his own initiative seriously wanted to launch a campaign to win them over. Even in 1909 when the Foreign Office told him off, he only was asked to be more sympathetic. Even Kismil, renowned as he was for his Anglophilism, did not obtain the support he had expected in 1908-9 and in 1912-3. But this clearly was not Lowther's fault. Kismil was barking up the wrong tree when in his frustration in early 1913 he bitterly exclaimed: "Alas, where is White, where is Currie?"² Lowther certainly could not be blamed for the high policy considerations which decided in favour of Britain's anti-Ottoman attitude. The Foreign Office was ready to listen to Lowther's stories about the Freemason-

1. Lowther to Nicolson, 19.6.13, Pte., LP.

2. quoted in Ahmad, *op. cit.*, p. 128.

Jewish plot but also had some good reasons not to support the Porte whether governed by Liberals or Young Turks. No doubt, Lowther's antipathy contributed to the estrangement of both countries from each other, but about the real issues which stood between them there was no difference between Whitehall and the Embassy. Lowther was only a true representative of the Foreign Office's policies in the main problems, ranging from Pan-Islam and Christian equality to concessions and interests in Mesopotamia and the Gulf. However, when he left Constantinople he was made an easy scapegoat.¹ As his successor was soon to learn the lesson that Britain's policy towards the Porte was not a matter of the sympathy or antipathy of one Ambassador or another but rather a question of high policy of an international and Imperial nature.

1. Lawrence's description of Lowther as "utter dud", or his allegation that Fitzmaurice was responsible for Britain's "ineffectiveness" cannot be sustained. T.E. Lawrence to his Biographer Liddell Hart, (London, 1938), pp. 87-88.

CHAPTER 6Mallet at Constantinople - the First Phase: October 1913-
July 1914a. The beginnings

Towards the end of his career in Constantinople, Lowther knew very well that he was facing "extinction", as his wife described it to Hardinge. There is little doubt that Lowther was regarded in the Foreign Office as a failure, and this feeling was conveyed to Hardinge by Parker. Hardinge could not conceal his strong opposition to Lowther's policy for he wrote to Parker that a change in the Constantinople Embassy was "badly" needed. Moreover, he added: "Had I remained at the Foreign Office, I am sure that I should have cut it short earlier. From what I hear the whole staff ought to be changed, as they are known to have an anti-Turkish bias, which they do not attempt to conceal." Hardinge could also not resist telling Nicolson that Lowther had not been a success.

Speculation was now rife as to the new Ambassador. Hardinge felt this might be Townley, the Minister in Tehran. Fitzmaurice would not have minded de Bunsen or Townley, but would have neither Bax-Ironside nor Sir Arthur Hardinge the Minister in Lisbon. Even Nicolson and Kitchener had been mentioned in the Embassy circles. This, however, was mere speculation. When it was Mallet who was appointed to the still important position at Constantinople, Nicolson admitted that this was unexpected and a "great surprise", but defended the appointment as a "very good one". He further explained to Goschen that the appointment was a very good one from the point of view of interchange between the Foreign Office and the diplomatic service.¹

1. Lady Lowther to Hardinge, 12.4.13. Pte. HP. 93. Hardinge to Nicolson, 16.5.13. Pte. NP. 367. Nicolson to Goschen, 18.6.13, Pte ibid. Same to same, 24.6.13. Pte. ibid. Fitzmaurice to Tyrell, 3.6.13, Pte., GP. 80. Hardinge to Parker, 18.8.13. Pte. HP. 93. Lowther to Grey, 1.9.13. FO/371/1845/44565. Grey to Lowther, 17.10.13. ibid. Hardinge to Mallet, 21.6.13. Pte. HP. 93. Hardinge to Sanderson, 22.5.13. Pte ibid.

For Mallet, however, this was to be a real test as his first important mission abroad after thirteen years in London. Still as head of the Eastern Department since 1907, he was hardly ignorant of Eastern affairs. As he disclosed to Hardinge he was himself greatly surprised as to his new appointment, although he knew that his chance of succeeding Nicolson in view of Crowe's aspirations, and Tyrrell's attitude was slim. So he felt that he should not, after all, be so sorry to leave for Constantinople. But with unusual prophetic vision he added: "I do not look forward with much confidence to being able to accomplish anything at Constantinople, and suppose that I shall be classed as a failure like every other Ambassador since Lord Stratford de Redcliffe. However, it will no doubt be very interesting." Sick as he was of being Assistant Under-Secretary of State, he was perplexed as to the kind of policy Britain wished to follow towards the Porte as he wrote to Hardinge in August 1913 -

I wish I were clearer as to the policy of H.M.G. in regard to Turkey. To judge by the Prime Minister's speech when the Turks returned to Adrianople and by the leaders in the Times one would think that the reoccupation of that town was a grave British misfortune, but I confess I can't see why we should take the lead against the Turks. Both politically and commercially it is to our interests that the Turks should hold Adrianople and remain a fairly strong power. The longer we can postpone the break-up of Turkey, the better. I have strongly urged these views and your [Hardinge's] telegram about Mussulman feeling had a great effect, but there is no consistency in our policy ... We alone shall suffer for our foolish words. You can really exercise more influence than anyone in the formation of a policy towards Turkey. If the break-up of the Asiatic dominion of Turkey is something to be avoided, and I imagine that it would be a great misfortune for India to see Russia in the six Vilayets, Germany in Asia Minor and France in Syria, a consistent policy of maintaining and strengthening the Ottoman empire (coupled with reforms) should be pursued and might be insisted by India ...

As far as Hardinge was concerned Mallet was right in his opinion that the integrity of the Ottoman Empire in Asia was a primary concern of the Government of India. Hardinge himself was encouraged in this policy not only by Mallet but also by the influential journalist Chirol, who also

condemned the "foolish" statement by Asquith which would not be forgotten in India. But Hardinge himself was quite convinced as he told Chirol that the attitude of the British Government towards the Porte was "most unfortunate". He used strong words to describe his disagreement with Britain's policy and he was especially annoyed that Grey and Asquith announced their policy from the "house-tops", and indignantly added: "It would be far better if Grey and Asquith would hold their tongues. They are frightened by Buxton and his Balkan Committee, while they ought to be much more frightened at the thought of the 80 millions of Mahomedans in this country." Hardinge was confident that his policy was the right one until as late as July 1914 when he urged the Foreign Office to leave the much disputed Aegean Islands to the Porte in order to consolidate their rule in Asia, though he agreed that Gladstone was right in his "bag and baggage" policy concerning Europe. However, both Mallet and Hardinge failed to impress the Foreign Office in their Indian argument, because the British Government attached more importance to what they thought were their obligations towards the Entente and the Balkan States. ^{1.}

But both Mallet and Hardinge lacked their former influence on Britain's foreign policy. It was not the Foreign Office's intention to bring about a volte face in Britain's policy towards the Porte by sending Mallet. But it also could be said that in view of Lowther's failure the Foreign Office was keen to send a man like Mallet, the most pro-Ottoman, or the least anti, of all the potential candidates. However, it was soon discovered that the heads of the Foreign Office itself were quite at a loss as to what Mallet's exact mission should be. Crowe, Mallet's successor in the Eastern Department, recommended that Mallet should proceed to Constantinople in a British cruiser. Apart from the fact that this had been done with regard to

1. Mallet to Hardinge, 11.8.13. Pte. HP. 93. Chirol to Hardinge, 20.6.13. Pte. ibid. Same to same, 9.7.13. Pte. ibid., same to same, 4.9.13, Pte. ibid. Hardinge to Nicolson, 5.2.14. Pte. NP. 372. Same to same, 2.7. Pte. NP. 375.

Morocco and "fitted" a maritime state like Britain, Crowe maintained the closure of the ordinary route by the Orient express made any other way impossible. But the main argument hinted at Crowe's will to turn a new page:

. . . It would both impress and gratify the Turks. We are at the present moment concluding a number of important conventions and arrangements which we hope will lead to a general good understanding with Turkey. There has been an unfortunate impression at Constantinople that our late Ambassador was too much identified with the anti-Committee parties. As a quiet demonstration of respect and respect to the Turkish Government, the arrival of the new ambassador in one of HM ships would, I am sure, be welcomed by them . . . It might produce a good impression in India, and please Lord Hardinge . . . There is nothing in the political situation at this moment to stand in the way of our indulging in an act of special courtesy to the Sultan. No other Power would possibly take umbrage at it.¹

A few days later Crowe reiterated his argument in favour of sending Mallet in a cruiser. Again he was sure that the Porte would consider it as "a compliment and welcome it". Now, however, he felt that the strongest argument in favour of such procedure was the effect it might have in India, in view of the fact that the Government of India had been "constantly urging" the London Government to do something which should show their respect for "the religious head of Islam and their friendliness to Turkey". Crowe was quite convinced that here was "a very suitable means ready at last for a friendly demonstration". He clarified that this did not commit Britain to "any line of policy, on any subject, because it is a mere act of courtesy, and nothing more".

Nicolson, however, objected strongly to Crowe's suggestion because the arrival of the Ambassador with "exceptional pomp" constituted an "entirely new departure". He was also not sure whether the Porte would view it as a compliment or not. But his main reservation was the danger that it might give the impression that Mallet was to inaugurate "some new policy" and was invested with "some special mission". Besides: "In Oriental countries the precise opposite frequently occurs to what we Westerners conceive would occur. Moreover, the other Embassies may misinterpret the measure. I do not see the necessity of departing from the custom hitherto

1. Minute by Crowe, 13.9.13., FO/371/1845/42686

observed, and I think there is some risk in doing so." Grey, trying to find a compromise, suggested that in order to avoid a misunderstanding the Embassy should inform the Porte that the new Ambassador would come to the Dardanelles on a cruiser but if a firman would be given he would proceed to Constantinople in that cruiser, if not he would proceed on a stationnaire. On 29 September, following the Ottoman-Greek tension Grey decided that it would be better if the cruiser sailed only to the Dardanelles. ^{1.}

So far as certain sections of the Ottoman press were concerned there was no doubt that Nicolson was right in his suspicions. The "Tasvir-i-Efkâr" wrote that the restoration of the old friendship between the Porte and Great Britain was forthcoming, and coincided with the fading of the Entente with Russia and the desire to appear as the protector of the Indian Moslems. ^{2.} The "Tanin" was even more enthusiastic. The fact that Mallet's appointment came shortly after the successful negotiations with Hakki and the Ottoman application for British inspectors for the Eastern vilayets was seen as the beginning of "a fresh chapter of cordiality" between the two countries:

England's Beaconsfield policy [wrote Jahid in the "Tanin"] has left in this country's memory very deep traces of friendly feeling towards England. On the other hand the fact that millions of Mussulmans are under British rule is a very powerful influence in the direction of bringing about a rapprochement between the two countries . . . the sight of a statesman who has striven to lay the foundation of a solid Turco-British friendship as Ambassador in Constantinople causes us to take a very hopeful view of the question. We trust that if any little obstacles and difficulties appear they will be surmounted by the experienced efforts of Sir Louis Mallet.

Crowe could not resist commenting "Magnificent" when he read this flattering article by a prominent CUP politician. ^{3.} Crowe's remark should be seen in the light of the scepticism which he had expressed only a few days earlier as to Marling's and Vansittart's belief that the Young Turk's policy

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1. Minute by Crowe, 23.9.13. Minutes, 24, 29.9. *ibid.*/43461
 2. Marling to Grey, 25.9.13, no. 816 (article from 22.9.)
 3. Mallet to Grey, 7.11.13. no. 920 (article from 1.11), minute 18.11.

might become "less storay" after their Annual Congress: "Is Saul also among the prophets?" he had asked. ^{1.}

Only a few days after Mallet entered Constantinople (24 October) he realised that the means of his arrival had mattered very little to the Porte. He reported to Grey on 4 November that the Ottomans were "determined" to consider his appointment as an act of friendship on the part of the British Government. Mallet, full of optimism and enthusiasm to open a new era in Anglo-Ottoman relations, promised Grey, to whom he wrote with more eagerness than to Nicolson, that he would take "what advantage I can" of the Porte's decision to regard his appointment as an act of friendship. He even suggested to Grey the right line:

I think at present that we are likely to get more done by suggestions and indirect methods than by collective notes and threats which the Powers are not prepared to back by force.

Only time could prove whether Mallet could successfully implement this formula. Meanwhile he could not do without Fitzmaurice, described only a few days after his arrival as his "right hand". His suggestion for a new policy should be seen in the light of his recognition of Fitzmaurice's invaluable service:

It is becoming every day clearer to me [he wrote to Grey 11 days after his arrival] that I shall not be able to do without him. His knowledge is so extensive and his means of getting it so varied that he is indispensable. I do not believe that his presence here will injure any chance of getting good relations with the Young Turks. On the contrary it is more likely to help me. I do not think they will press it, as he appears to be on excellent terms with all prominent people. If they do, it will be best to say that you do not see your way to complying. ^{2.}

Mallet was probably relieved when Grey had informed him that he "certainly" could have him if he wished. Fitzmaurice, however, because of ill-health

1. Marling to Grey, 20.10.13, no. 874. Minutes 28-29.10

2. Mallet to Grey, 4.11.13. Pte. GP. 80. Mallet to Nicolson, 4.11.13. Pte. NP. 371.

did not stay at Constantinople beyond February 1914. ^{1.}

b. Mallet and the Young Turks.

Mallet was embarrassed by the CUP's misunderstanding of his functions as Ambassador. While Halil and Halajian regarded the dockyard concession as the most important one given for some years, and one which indicated their confidence in and friendship with Britain, Mallet disliked encouraging them as he knew that he could not fulfil their hopes. These Ottoman high expectations, he admitted, were his "great" difficulty since he had arrived in the capital. This, however, did not prevent him from going out of his way to demonstrate his pro-CUP views. He was strongly impressed by the "complimentary character" of the dinners to which he was invited. What he meant by this was Talaat's, Halil's and Jemal's declarations that they would send their children and relatives to English schools, because they produced men "eminently" capable of administrative work. He was absolutely sure that the Porte was sincerely working for reform not only in civil administration but in the army and navy too, though as to the last two he was careful not to tell them what were Britain's opinions, because of the doubt as to their success and the great expenditure involved. However, he felt that they were essential for consolidating the Ottoman Empire. If this kind of identification with the CUP's ideals were not enough, Mallet added that the present Government was "certainly more efficient" than any Ottoman Government for some years.

Nevertheless, although Mallet told the Young Turks that he had been impressed by their goodwill towards Britain, he also told them that he could do but little to impress on his Government the need to give them a chance. The Foreign Office certainly did not share Mallet's high

^{1.} Grey to Mallet, 12.11.13. Pte GP. 80. Fitzmaurice left Constantinople, on the advice of the Embassy doctor on the 26th. He was suffering from a "severe nervous breakdown". Mallet to Grey, 20.2.14. tel. no. 116. Medical documents attached. A. Ryan, op.cit. p. 86. P.P. Graves, Briton and Turk (London, 1941), p.188, argues that Fitzmaurice was transferred to placate the CUP.

opinions of the CUP, as Crowe commented:

If the Turkish Government were so genuinely friendly to us, they would not continue to organise anti-British agitation in India by their secret emissaries. Their professions must not be taken too seriously. Their policy, like that of most countries, is inspired not by national professions, but by calculated self-interest. They will use us when it suits them, and play us off against the other Powers at all times. 1.

By early 1914 the rise to prominence of Enver and Jemal/aroused more British interest. Mallet's attitude was typical. As to Enver's appointment as Minister of War, he did not see any reason to take an alarmist view, adding that in his opinion there was "no prima facie" disadvantage in younger men taking office." But he knew that he would be more "agreeable" to Germany than the independent Jemal. Another advantage in Enver's becoming a Minister was his prominence in the Moslem world, although he would not be popular with part of the army. 2.

But Clerk was less enthusiastic. He maintained that in the eyes of the Young Turks he was "a 'triple' hero" by virtue of his prominent role in the 1908 Revolution, as a commander in Tripoli, and by being "the chief actor" in the 1913 coup d'état. Yet, he was a "rather mysterious personality" and had not yet impressed "the general imagination" as being one of the "real" leaders of the CUP. "Perhaps", Clerk concluded, "his new post will reveal unsuspected qualities." 3. Nicolson, however, was afraid that Enver's appointment was ominous so far as the Islands question was concerned:

. . . Enver Pasha is an exceedingly ambitious, unscrupulous and bold personage, and as he apparently dominates the situation at Constantinople he may be induced to take some startling steps [over the Islands]. I doubt [he wrote to Goschen] if the

1. Mallet to Grey 16.12.13. no. 1008. Minute, 24.12.

2. Mallet to Grey 6.1.14, tel. no. 9, ibid., no. 193

3. Same to same, 3.1.14, tel. no. 3. Minute, 3.1.

lack of funds would prove a really serious deterrent, as hitherto the want of money has not prevented Turkey, or for the matter of that the Balkan States, from undertaking hostile enterprises . . .

A few days later he again repeated his anxieties by claiming that the present regime in Constantinople was at the danger point "as I fear that Enver Pasha may consider it necessary, in order to justify himself, to take some headstrong action." However, Lieut. Col. Cunliffe-Owen, the new Military Attaché at Constantinople had more to say about Enver. Though rapidly promoted, it did not seem that Enver possessed any "very striking military genius". If he did, this had not been revealed in the recent Balkan battles. Nevertheless he did not deny that he had a "forceful personality and energetic driving power". Moreover, his appointment was a clear sign that the Porte intended to quicken the army reorganisation "with all vigour". But the appointment of so junior an officer as Minister of War "must certainly" arouse the opposition of the older officers, and these were the enemies which he had made in his earlier career. ¹.

But it was Jemal in whom Mallet was particularly interested and whom he both praised and criticised. He admitted that his term as Vali of Adana and Baghdad had given him experience in provincial administration, and was "thoroughly honest and self-sacrificing", a man of "exceptional determination" and "not wanting in breadth of view in dealing with the non-Turkish elements". Mallet had been favourably impressed by his three meetings with Jemal, but

I am unable to say whether he possesses those qualities of statesmanship which are indispensable to the successful conduct of affairs, especially in this country, and at the present time. His somewhat uncompromising bent of mind and his want of experience and knowledge might prove a source of difficulty in the relations of the Government with Foreign Powers.

He also warned that if he were to become Minister of Marine he might embarrass Britain. Mallet's criticism was ignored in the Foreign Office where he had been labelled as supporter of the CUP. As Norman commented

1. Cunliffe-Owen to Mallet, 5.1.14, no.2 in: Mallet to Grey 7.1.14, no. 9

Sir Louis Mallet is evidently much impressed with the personality of Jemal Bey and, I gather, rather admires the Committee Party in general. 1.

But it was rather Enver who frightened the Foreign Office and Nicolson more than anybody else. This "ambitious and forcible" person, Nicolson claimed, would certainly consider it necessary to show to his countrymen that he was the "champion" of their rights and interests. He was told that Enver considered himself in his vanity the "future Napoleon" of the Ottoman Empire, "who, though perhaps not a man of action is, I am told, an exceedingly astute and able politician." Nicolson's conclusion was that the recent reshuffle in the CUP Government would bring with it "some rather startling developments." 2.

Mallet, contrary to his predecessor, dealt only very little with the question of Parliamentary rule in the Ottoman Empire. This could be explained on two grounds: Mallet's admiration of the CUP's leadership without questioning its undemocratic methods, and the lack of interest in the Foreign Office in the question in this this period. But the question again came up after the elections of early 1914 and the opening of Parliament on 14 May. Mallet claimed that in most cases opposition candidates were absent and the CUP authorities did not even pretend to be impartial or to stand for freedom. Only at Basra, where Talib and his "creatures" had been the candidates, Mecca and Jedda non-CUP deputies had been elected. Although the elections proved to be a caricature of the democratic system, Mallet declared that the CUP might hope for "a long lease of life". This was not a hasty conclusion since the elections showed the strong grip the CUP's Government had on the country at large. Mallet did not overlook the factors of European diplomacy, as one writer stated, when he predicted a long CUP rule. He, as everybody else, could not foresee the forthcoming events which led to the destruction of the Ottoman Empire. In the given political situation of May 1914 Mallet was

1. Mallet to Grey, 30.12.13, no. 1044. Minute by Norman, 7.1.14.

2. Nicolson to Hardinge, 15.1.14. Pte. NP. 372

right in claiming that only a "convulsion" like the Albanian one which had driven the CUP from power in July 1912, could bring an end to the CUP's rule. Neither can one claim, as has the same writer, that Mallet was either "cynical" or that he had "over-confident liberalism", when he practically justified the fact that the CUP, though having a strong grip over the country, still thought it necessary to have Parliamentary rule. He thought that they could gain by "outward respect" for constitutionalism, which after all was their "original raison d'être". Mallet certainly regarded the Young Turks as practical and pragmatic rulers since they "have chosen to reconcile constitutional forms with the only kind of Government suited to an Oriental country, and especially one composed of mixed elements, i.e., a more or less intelligent despotism. . . ." Mallet's interpretation was favourably accepted in the Foreign Office, where Crowe, like many beforehand, maintained that the elections were "a pure farce, like all oriental attempts to adopt parliamentary forms and methods. (Egypt, Persia, China, etc. etc.)." ¹

In the Embassy at Constantinople Mallet and Beaumont, his Counsellor, were quite sure, as late as the eve of the war, that relations with the Porte were now much better than before they had arrived. They denied that the Young Turks' regime was bound "hand and foot" to Germany or that Kiamil's overthrow was a "serious blow" to British influence. Neither of these "prophecies", they claimed, had been materialised:

The Young Turks are now firmer in the saddle than before; the bitter experience of their first mistakes have taught them wisdom, and if blunders are still being made, on the whole it must be admitted that Talaat, Enver, Djemal and the other leading spirits of the committee have not only been fortunate but have deserved their good fortune.

They justified the coup d'état of January 1913 on the necessity of saving Adrianople even by violent means. Nazim's murder was "merely a regrettable accident". After all, the first shots had been fired by Nazim's aide-de-camp. The prediction that the Young Turks were hostile to Britain had been "disproved over and over again". Their proofs for

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Mallet to Grey, 21.5.14, no. 363. Minute 26.5. Ahmad, pp. 143, 151 who erroneously interpreted Mallet's judgements.

the reverse were: the first appeal for the introduction of the Armenian reform was made to England; the "cordial" help which Crawford had always been given by the Porte; the same was true about Admiral Limpus; but the "most striking" instance of the CUP "confidence" in Britain was the conclusion in December of the docks contract:

No such contract has ever been made in any country and it was secured without payment of a penny of backsheesh in the face of formidable competition by the Krupp and Orlando Works . . .

Mallet and Beaumont shared the feeling of the Ottoman statesmen that Britain had offered "very little" in comparison with France, Germany and even Italy, since the British capitalists held aloof from participating in the economic development of the country. They also believed that Germany's aim was to maintain the integrity of the Ottoman Empire which had been proved by the readiness to reorganise the Ottoman army and by the friendship of Kaiser Wilhelm, the declared champion of Islam.

This optimistic evaluation of the situation, which was shortly to be brutally shattered, has to be explained in the context of the admiration felt by Mallet and Beaumont for the Young Turk leadership and chiefly for Talaat and Enver. Talaat was regarded as "the most striking" personality of the CUP, a man of "high capacity" and "great energy", but they added prophetically "there is some danger that he may be carried further [in his patriotism] than he wishes by his more violent and chauvinist associates". They claimed that Enver considered he resembled Napoleon, whose part he wished to play and for whom he had great admiration. The Embassy was partly inclined to accept this: "In boldness of conception, but not in importance of immediate results, the coup d'état of 23rd January might be compared to the more famous one of the 9th November 1799 . . . and his recent marriage with a Princess of the Imperial family may possibly help his career in the same way as Madame de Beauharnais helped that of Napoleon".

How little the Embassy knew about the Young Turks' plans and how inadequate was the Foreign Office's knowledge, only the forthcoming

events could really show. ^{1.}

c. The Armenian Question

Though Mallet stated that Fitzmaurice would be indispensable to him, he preferred not to accept the former Lowther-Fitzmaurice anti-CUP line. This was demonstrated in his attitude towards the Armenian question, which indicated a complete volte face to that of his predecessor. Mallet could not of course ignore the Consuls' reports, but he greatly differed from them as to the sort of the "radical treatment" necessary. This resulted from Mallet's belief and confidence in the Young Turks' leadership, and first and foremost that of Talaat and Jemal. Mallet/described their personalities and policies as if they had undergone an entire change, which was not the case. Hence his view that Talaat had/recently shown himself "thoroughly alive" to the Armenians' lot, by ordering the imprisonment of two notorious Kurdish "brigand" chiefs in the Van vilayet and would take more steps to see that his policy would be carried out in the other vilayets too. Talaat also intended to deal with the agrarian problem with "drastic" means. If this evidence was not enough Mallet had in store further proof for Talaat's and Jemal's "markedly friendly disposition": their presence at the "national" celebration of the 1500th anniversary of the invention of the Armenian alphabet. Both of them, Mallet wrote enthusiastically, had made speeches on the occasion professing sympathy with the Armenians and reminding them of their "patriotic" participation in the Balkan wars. They had further professed their "firm" wish to work "hand in hand" with the Armenian element for the Constitutional regeneration of the Ottoman Empire. Mallet was convinced that the Armenians were "desirous" to take advantage

1. Annual report for Turkey, 1913 in Beaumont to Grey, 4.12.14. FO/371/2137/79138. The report was written almost entirely before the outbreak of the European War.

of the "friendship" manifested by the Porte and to achieve a possible improvement in their situation, though he admitted the possibility that the Young Turks could be motivated by the hope of evading the reforms imposed on them by the Powers.

Britain was again in danger of being directly involved in the Armenian question when the Porte suggested to Crawford that he be the president of the "informal" commission to advise them about their own reform scheme. Mallet was very enthusiastic about this "excellent" scheme as the Porte had "complete" confidence in Crawford and would accept his recommendations. Crowe, much less enthusiastic than Mallet as to the future survival of the Ottoman Empire, clarified the Foreign Office's position: Crawford's appointment for such a commission could be approved only if the Porte adopted the Russo-German scheme. Since Crawford's appointment threatened to be an isolated action by Britain it was rejected offhand. ^{1.}

Mallet, however, was much more concerned with the Porte's attitude. He proposed not to make any representations since the Ottomans were "very touchy" and "absolutely determined" not to accept any collective scheme. Nevertheless, he suggested that he inform the Porte of Britain's attitude, at this stage "especially as they seem rather inclined to attribute more significance to the change of Ambassadors here than is justified". The British susceptibilities were confirmed by the Russians, though the Germans promised a solution. ^{2.}

So, Mallet had to shelve his own pro-Ottoman views and adopt those of the Foreign Office when he spoke to the Porte. On 11 November he

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1. Mallet to Grey, 28.10.13, no.906, conf. minute by C.Russell, 11.11. Same to same, 31.10.13, tel. no. 532. Minute by Crowe, 1.11. BD.ibid no. 573. Grey to Mallet, 3.11.13, tel. no. 509, ibid., no.574. Grey to Goschen, 4.11.13, tel.no.379, ibid., no. 575.
 2. Mallet to Grey, 4.11.13. Pte.GP.80. Same to same, 9.11.13. Pte ibid O'Beirne to Grey, 5.11.13, tel. no.379, ibid., no.576. Goschen to Grey, 6.11.13, tel. no. 192, ibid., nos. 578, 580.

informed Said Halim that Britain regarded the Porte's adoption of the Powers' scheme as of "vital" interest to the Ottoman Empire. However, the Grand Vizier stated that the Porte would never agree to accept the Russian scheme which promised such extensive powers to the European Inspectors-General, since it would create an "imperium in imperio". Following the successful example of Crawford he now proposed merely foreign advisers instead of the Inspectors. Mallet promised Said Halim that Giers' scheme would be the "best" guarantee against intervention by a single Power. He impressed upon him the need for Europe's control for the assurance both of the Powers and the Armenians. He cited Asquith's Guildhall speech of the 10th to clarify that the "good government" of the six Vilayets was a "pressing" question which was "vitally" connected with the integrity of the Ottoman Empire. Mallet spoke strongly to an Ottoman statesman for the first time. He told the Grand Vizier that the failure of the new regime to introduce reforms caused "distrust" in England as to the future. Said Halim replied that this was "very unfair" since the new regime had been in power only for a "very" few years in which the country had been prey to dissensions and wars. Now, he claimed, the situation had "greatly" improved and "considerable" progress had been made.

Mallet did not deny to the Foreign Office that the situation was "difficult", but he was hopeful that Giers would find a good solution. He was confident that Talast's visit to the Eastern Vilayets would "doubtless" be followed by good results, but admitted that it was a matter of "grave doubt" whether the reforms would last long. He therefore suggested that no irritating steps should be taken which might force the Porte to adopt an extreme policy.^{1.}

Mallet soon realised that matters were more difficult than he had imagined. One of the reasons had been the Powers' "weakness" to use

1. Mallet to Grey, 13.11.13., no. 934, ibid., no. 582

"real" pressure in the event of the Porte's refusal, as had been manifested in the Adrianople crisis. His conclusion was, however, that more confidence should be placed on Talaat, "who is a man of great courage and force of character."

In this complicated situation Mallet was grateful that Grey and Nicolson allowed him to have Fitzmaurice, who, he again admitted was "unrivalled in our line and has an extraordinary posture here". But despite Fitzmaurice's help, Mallet was still confused.

It is very difficult to know what to report to you, as this place is a sort of whispering gallery and everyone who comes to tell me tells me a different story.

Doubtless bewildered by the intricacies and intrigues of the political and diplomatic realities of the Ottoman capital perhaps it is not surprising that he was also disappointed in the standard of his colleagues; "compared to the diplomats in London, they are not an interesting collection and rather boutonne". And he found comfort in his "exceptionally large" official reception which was attended by a "great force" of Young Turks, where he talked to "all" the prominent ones who expressed "devotion" to Britain who, so they had hoped, would give them a chance. ¹.

The Porte was prepared to give the Advisers more powers than the Inspectors General, but Giers was not yet satisfied. Mallet strongly insisted that the Powers not impose any scheme upon the Porte because the latter would hinder its execution. He proposed not to apply threats and to retain the "good-will and co-operation of the Porte. Mallet certainly took very seriously the tone of the "Tanin" and the "Jeune Turo", which blamed Europe for launching yet another crusade upon the Ottoman Empire with the intention of preventing her from recovering from the last

1. Mallet to Nicolson, 15.11.13. Pte. NP. 371. Same to same, 16.11.13. Pte. ibid.

war and humiliating her. They warned that European control would transform the Eastern Vilayets into a "volcano" and that a CUP cabinet could never accept that. The "Tanin" wrote on the 22nd:

The CUP Cabinet is not hostile to Europe. On the contrary, it owed its birth to its idea and resolved to utilise European knowledge, progress and experience and to bring new life to 20th century civilisation to the inert and languished Orient.

The Foreign Office surprisingly agreed that from the Ottoman point of view this tone was "plausible", although the present phase of the negotiations inspired little hope.¹

Giers, meanwhile, presented to Said Halim the latest minimum demand of the Powers: the idea of the foreign Inspectors was given up and foreign Advisers were proposed instead. Both Mallet and the Foreign Office regretted that the Advisers would be chosen from minor Powers. Mallet thought this "very unfortunate" since the English would be "well suitable" and not meddle in politics.²

Mallet was optimistic as to the possibility of solving the Armenian question not only through a combined Ottoman-European reform scheme but also through opening up the country by new railways. He refused to regard it primarily as a national question, for before the development of the railways in the Eastern Vilayets took place "there cannot be any real improvement because without roads there is no means of transport and exchange, so that the inhabitants must remain in a primitive state of civilisation".³ He further believed that harmonious relations were possible between the Porte and the Armenians. Hence his confidence that friendship and ceremonies should be counted as a manifestation of policy, and which he interpreted as the Porte's "benevolent sentiments". This

1. Mallet to Grey, 18.11.13, no.939. ibid., no.583. Same to same. 24.11.13. no.953. Minute by C.Russell, 28.11. FO/371/1816. Same to same. 13.11.13. no.934. Minute by Russell, 24.11. FO/371/1815.

2. Mallet to Grey, 25.11.13, no.958. ibid., no.584. Minute by Russell, 1.12. FO/371/1816.

3. Mallet to Grey, 25.11.13. Pte. GP. 80.

time it included the special courtesy with which the Porte had entrusted M.Zaven, the new Armenian Patriarch. The Sultan had conferred upon him a high class decoration, and Zaven on his part had, of course, to lay "special emphasis" upon the loyalty of the Armenians. Mallet's conclusion could easily be guessed: "it is to be hoped that circumstances will not prevent him [Zaven] from taking advantage of the declared goodwill and dispositions of the present Cabinet towards the Armenians."¹

Meanwhile the negotiations for the Powers' reform scheme reached a difficult phase and Mallet felt that he should try and influence the Grand Vizier to come to a compromise. Said Halim, who said to Mallet that the suggested reform scheme was "wounding to their dignity and would not work in practice", was assured by Mallet that the Powers had no "ulterior" motives and that the Armenians if "properly" governed would be a "source of strength" to the Porte. Mallet believed that the Armenians were not looking for independence as the Patriarch had assured him, and he tried to persuade the Grand Vizier to believe in it too.

Mallet's optimism, however, suffered another rebuff. He reported that "suddenly" the whole question had taken a bad turn, as the "more chauvinistic" members of the CUP had obtained the upper hand. Now he was more familiar with the realities of the Armenian question as violent anti-Armenian activities had taken place. He suggested to the Foreign Office that if Giers' project did not get through it would be better to take no responsibility and let the Porte work out "their own salvation in the Eastern Vilayets - or the reverse."

In the Foreign Office Mallet's attitude was approved as a result of the absence of an alternative policy. Crowe was in favour of "threatening definite hostile action" in the event of the Porte's refusal.

1. Same to same, 27.11.13, no.965. Minute by C.Russell, 3.12.

But he knew very well that this was not possible in view, as Grey put it, of the division amongst the Powers over the Liman von Sanders* and the Aegean Islands questions. Crowe added:

. . . it will not be to the interest of G. Britain to put herself conspicuously forward in leading the assault on the Turkish Government, unless HMG are prepared to risk the loss of our whole position in Turkey and the spread of grave commotion in India and possibly in Egypt.

Grey concluded that there was no alternative but to come nearer to the Porte's view. Mallet's attitude gained a victory and was regarded as "very judicious".^{1.}

But even earlier Grey and Nicolson encouraged Mallet to believe that he had made "a very good start". Perhaps he needed encouragement not only in face of the complicated situation but owing to his discovery, by early December, that Fitzmaurice, though being "the most interesting member of the Embassy and the most useful", was also "certainly too prejudiced against the present regime and has not much constructive ability". He admitted that his post was "a very difficult one to fill properly unless one has been here for some time". He made, moreover, the following confession to Grey: "I am the prey of every rumour and sometimes I really feel as if I was living in a totally different world from London."^{2.}

The Foreign Office had also to take notice of a different kind of material concerning the Armenians. It concerned the supporters of the Armenian cause in England. Apart from agreeing that the situation was "gloomy" they were divided as to the remedy. Buxton advocated that Russia should be entrusted with the execution of the reforms, but Lady Cavendish, of the Friends of Armenia feared the possible Russian annexation of the Armenian provinces. The Foreign Office favoured neither of these solutions as practical and Crowe refused to discuss either British or Russian policies with Lady Cavendish. She was, however, informed by the

1. Mallet to Grey, 1.12.13, no. 978. Minutes by Crowe and Grey, 18.12. ibid no. 586. Same to same, 2.12.13, Pte. GP. 80.

2. Grey to Mallet, 12.11.13. Pte. GP. 80. Mallet to Grey, 2.12.13. Pte ibid

Foreign Office that the object of the British Government was not the dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire but the integrity of its dominions, and that it was acting to secure reforms in Armenia through the European Concert. 1.

By late December no progress had been made in the Ottoman-Armenian negotiations on proportional representation. 2. Mallet claimed, contrary to what Lowther had reported, that it would be "unfortunate" if the Tashnaks and Henschaks, who were "closely" allied to the CUP would now come to a "definite rupture". The situation was further complicated when the Greek Patriarch also demanded proportional representation for his community. But Mallet was inclined to sympathise with the Porte's reluctance to grant this. He justified the Young Turks' refusal to allow free elections on the ground that this was perhaps a "natural instinct of self-preservation" in view of the fact that the "Turks" were in a minority in the Empire and inferior in intelligence and business capacity to the Arabs, Greeks, Armenians and Jews. The danger of the "Turkish" element being swamped in the Ottoman Chamber was well understood in the Foreign Office, where constitutional rule was hardly expected from the Porte. Crowe commented that in a country like the Ottoman Empire free elections and proportional representation could only be "a farce". 3 But the question of reform was a more difficult one. Mallet had to defend, in a conversation with Jemal, Britain's refusal of the previous July to send officials to re-organise the Eastern Vilayets. Jemal criticised Britain's submission to Russia's will. Mallet did not deny this but explained it as an inevitable part of the balance of power policy in which Britain was committed to support the Triple Entente. He found it necessary to clarify that this policy was actually in the Porte's favour: "they [HMG] would be very

1. Guinness to Grey, 6.12.13. Minutes by Russell and Nicolson, 9.12. FO/371 1773. Lady Cavendish to Grey, 9.12.13. Minutes, 15-18.12. ibid./56074. Grey to Lady Cavendish, 18.12.13. ibid. N. Buxton, "The Russians in Armenia". Nineteenth Century and After (December, 1913), pp. 1357-1366.

2. Mallet to Grey, 28.11.13 no. 966. Minute by C. Russell, 4.12. Mallet to Nicolson, 8.12.13 Pte. NP. 373. Mallet to Grey 9.12.13. Pte GP. 80

3. Mallet to Grey, 29.12.13, no. 1048. conf. BD. no. 185

loth to put Turkey into a position from which it would not be possible for G.Britain to extricate them. As Lord Salisbury had said on one occasion, "G.Britain could not send a navy across the Taurus". No comment was made in the Foreign Office on Jemal's plea for Britain to take a "less negative" attitude than the one she had taken in the previous two years. ^{1.}

A solution had been found in the very last days of 1913. The Porte had eventually agreed to two foreign Inspectors recommended by the Powers. Mallet was pleased since the Armenians did not like the idea of Advisers. He felt that this concession would have "good results". Although he was somewhat sceptical as to the Inspectors' ability to perform their difficult duties over such a vast area he was able to persuade the Foreign Office that "much" would depend upon the men selected for the post. It was hoped that "they would be able to insist on the punishment of crime and outrage brought to their knowledge". The Foreign Office further hoped that the appointment of the two Inspectors would be "very gratifying" to the Armenian sympathisers in Europe. Indeed, for the Foreign Office this kind of consideration was also regarded as an achievement. ²

As a matter of fact all this time there were no complaints as to any danger to the Armenians from the Consuls. The only real grievance was the imprisonment of the editor of the Armenian paper "Azatamart" for reproducing an article from Contemporary Review (December 1913). But Britain could not claim any right of interference, apart from a private and unofficial representation by Mallet, since, as Grey admitted in the Commons, this fell within the capacity of the Ottoman Press Law. ^{3.} From Van it was even reported that public security had increased in the last quarter of 1913. But the Armenians attributed the improvement to the Porte's desire to

1. Same to same, 31.12.13, no. 1045. ibid no. 587. Minute by Russell, 6.1.14 FO/371/2116

2. Same to same, 31.12.13, no. 1045. ibid. no. 587. Minute by Russell, 6.1.14. FO/371/2116.

3. Miss E.J. Robinson to Rev. McMillan (transmitted by the Archbishop of Canterbury), 7.12.13. Minute by Russell, 12.12. FO/371/1848. The British Armenian Committee to Grey, 12.1.14. Minute by Clerk, 16.1. FO/371/2122. Parliamentary Question by Mr Ponsonby and Grey's reply 17.2.14 Hansard Vol. LVIII Col. 789 Mallet to Grey, 11.2.14. no. 90.

demonstrate to the Powers that they too could achieve good government. The Russian claim that there was danger of disturbances in Erzeroum was played down by Mallet, who explained that if there was tension it was a result of the uncertainty as to the result of the reform negotiations. He rejected the possibility of an imminent danger, but agreed that it was "very desirable" that the reform question should be settled quickly before the population became more excited.^{1.}

Mallet managed to persuade the Foreign Office that his optimism was well-grounded. This was exemplified in Vice-Consul Smith's reports from Van, in which he advanced the idea that the aspirations of the majority of Armenians were economic rather than political, since the Armenians were "above all" a commercial race. Smith suggested, therefore, that if the Porte constructed roads, placed a few motor boats on Lake Van and hurried the building of a railway, the country would then become "prosperous" and "the so-called Armenian question at least with regard to this vilayet, would to a great extent cease to exist with the advent of increased trade and prosperity". Simultaneously Smith reported in a second despatch on the same day that the Tashnaks had secretly imported Mauser pistols and that these were openly carried by the population. Their intention, explained Smith, was to enable the Armenian population to "hold their own" against the Moslem in the event of necessity. In the Foreign Office the report on the arming of the Armenians was just ignored. Russell commented that Smith had written with "reasoned optimism", Clerk praised Tahain Bey, the Vali of Van, who continued to do well, and Crowe especially found the first despatch "worth reading".^{2.}

A few days later, however, Mallet had reported that there was difficulty about the parity of representation between Moslems and

1. Same to same, 6.1.14. no. 6. Grey to Mallet, 14.1.14.tel.no.27. Mallet to Grey, 16.1.14. tel. no.37.

2. Smith to Mallet, 10.1.14. nos. 1,2 in: Mallet to Grey, 30.1.14,no.59 Minutes, 9-17.2. (approved by Nicolson and Grey).

Christians in the General Assemblies and Administrative Councils. Giers had already given in to Said Halim on the question of the Vali's independence from the Inspectors. But he obtained the Porte's consent to parity in Van and Bitlis. Sazonov, contrary to Giers' advice also demanded equality in Sivas, Kharput and Diarbekir.^{1.} Eventually a solution was found and the project was signed on 8 February 1914. The question of the Armenian participation in the elections was also settled. The Armenian Patriarch informed a much pleased Sazonov of his "entire satisfaction".^{2.}

Although Mallet saw some difficulty as to the number of Inspectors that should be proposed to the Porte, he regarded the Armenian reform question as practically solved "thank goodness" and that "everybody" in Constantinople was pleased. Nicolson too was "very glad" that the Armenian question was finally solved, much to Russia's credit, and added optimistically:

I do hope that this reform project will really bear some fruits, though it is one of a long series of such admirable schemes which have all hitherto been absolutely barren in their results.^{3.}

Now it was agreed that parity in representation should be established not only in Van and Bitlis but in Erzeroum too while in Sivas, Kharput and Diarbekir representation should be according to the existing lists of the inhabitants. But in the Foreign Office it was felt that the settlement of the representation problem could not be regarded as an important element in the improvement of conditions in Armenia.

The Porte, so Nicolson suspected, was trying to "whittle down" the

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1. Same to same, 28.1.14. no.48.ibid. no. 590. Same to same, 1.2.14. tel. no. 76.
 2. Mallet to Grey, 8.2.14, tel.no.91. Same to same, 3.2.14, no.71. Buchanan to Grey, 9.2.14, tel.no.44
 3. Mallet to Grey, 10.2.14, Pte. GP.80. Nicolson to Buchanan 10.2.14. Pte.NP.372. Mallet to Nicolson, 10.2.14.Pte.ibid. Nicolson to Mallet, 16.2.14. Pte. ibid.

extensive powers of the Inspectors by suggesting a Director General in addition - a departure from the agreed reform scheme. What Grey and Nicolson were ready to agree to was an Adviser to the Ministry of the Interior, analogous to that desired by the Ottoman Ministry of Justice and not an official superior to the Inspectors. ^{1.}

But in the Armenian provinces as such the prospects did not seem so promising. Bullard, the Acting Consul in Erzeroum, was anxious about the plan of the Bishop of the town to increase the numbers of the Armenian population by 30% to 60% by repatriation, birth and reconversion. Bullard did his best to discourage the Bishop from a "reconversion crusade" among ex-Armenians and against "a sort of Zionist propaganda" among Armenians living in Russia or America since neither would bring harmony to the Eastern Vilayets. ^{2.} The situation in Bitlis became serious in March because of the threats made by the Kurds. Mallet made representations to the Porte, who acted with vigour, made wide arrests and declared martial law. The Ambassador reported that the Kurds' movement was directed against the Government rather than the Armenians. From Van the Consul claimed that the question of lands in dispute between the Kurds and Armenians was one of "the most vital problems" and should be faced by a "serious" reform scheme. The Foreign Office, however, already agreed that it should be dealt with by the Inspectors-General, who should contact the Consul about it. ^{3.}

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1. Mallet to Grey, 9.2.14. no. 86. BD. ibid. no. 591. (Minutes by Russell and Nicolson, 17.2. FO/371/2116). Mallet to Nicolson, 17.2.14. Pte. NP. 372. Mallet to Grey, 17.2.14. tel. no. III. Minutes, 18.2. BD. ibid. no. 592. Grey to Mallet, 19.2.14. tel. no. 96, ibid. no. 593. Mallet to Grey, 19.2.14. tel. no. 114. Minutes, 20.2. Same to same, 23.2.14. tel. no. 121. Minutes, 24.2. Same to same, 25.2.14, tel. no. 124. Minutes, 26.2. Same to same, 4.3.14. tel. no. 136. Minutes.
 2. Bullard to Mallet, 25.2.14, no. 5 in: Mallet to Grey, 10.3.14. no. 163. Same to same, 14.9.14, no. 583. Minutes, 8.10.
 3. Mallet to Grey, 14.3.14. tel. no. 167. Same to same, 17.3.14, no. 178. Same to same, 14.3.14. no. 174. Minute by Russell, 19.3.

The consequent fighting between the Ottoman Government and the Kurds aroused little interest in the Foreign Office, even when it was reported that it had caused ill-feeling between "Turks" and Armenians "...we ought not to be troubled at all", wrote Crowe impatiently. ^{1.}

The British Government however, was insulted when the Russians treated the question of the selection of the Inspectors as a "purely" Russian concern, and Crowe felt that the British Government was thus put in a "most undignified" position. The Porte had finally chosen Major Hoff, Norwegian and M. Westeneck of the Dutch East Indian Administration, out of the five candidates who had been offered to her. In May the new Inspectors signed their contracts with the Porte and were expected to start in early July. Said Halim spoke with contempt about their "rapacity" concerning their salary. In the Foreign Office this was regarded as a "regrettable beginning". On the eve of the European War Said Halim expressed pessimism as to their possible success. Mallet too felt they would not get "cordial support" from the Porte. ^{2.} The outbreak of the European war finally caused the practical abandonment of the Armenian reform scheme. Westeneck never proceeded to the Armenian Vilayets, while Hoff did, but was recalled by the Porte because of the difficulties in accomplishing his task owing to the mobilisation of the Ottoman army. Between August and October 1914 the British Government received little information about the actual situation in the Eastern Vilayets. The information which had been obtained by Aneurin Williams, M.P., Chairman of the British Armenian Committee, on the precarious situation could not be verified through official channels. Anyhow, Grey stated that Britain had done all in her power to induce the Porte to preserve peace, but there was nothing more which he could do. ^{3.} But in late September Mallet reported

1. Mallet to Grey, 3.4.14. tel.no. 217. Same to same, 17.4.14.no.259

2. Memo by Benckendorff, 16.3.14. Minutes, 17.3. FO/371/2116/11895. Mallet to Grey, 7.4.14. no.233. Minute by Clerk, 16.4. Also: BD. ibid . no.595 Same to same, 27.5.14. no.376. Minute by Russell. Beaumont to Grey. 27.7.14. no. 542.

3. Williams to Grey, 18.9.14. ibid./51007. (Minutes, 19.9.) Mallet to Grey, 23.9.14. tel. no. 842. Minutes, 5-6.10.

in pessimistic tones about the unhappy relations between the Young Turks and the Armenians. Now he seemed to realise for the first time that the situation was explosive, but was still naively convinced that if the Inspectors-General were able to fulfill the reform scheme under peaceful conditions it was possible that "some substantial improvement might have been effected and the position of the Government really consolidated".¹

d. The Liman von Sanders Question *

A few days after Mallet's arrival in Constantinople Britain was faced with another crisis which like the Armenian question might have had similar international repercussions. This was the appointment of General Liman von Sanders to command the Ottoman army at Constantinople. The Germans, however, tried to describe his appointment as merely part of their programme of the extension of their existing military mission from 12 to 42 officers, and they would concentrate on organising military schools. But the British Military Attaché in Berlin reported that Liman and his officers would have "unlimited" powers to assist the Porte to reorganise its army.²

Nicolson sympathised with the Russian apprehensions from the very beginning. He felt that the Russian position, which had allowed the continuation of Ottoman rule at Constantinople, was preferable to that of any other Power, apart from the British themselves. Britain thus in practice regarded not only the Armenian provinces as a recognised Russian "sphere of influence", but also Constantinople. The Germans were apparently

1. Same to same, 25.9.14. no.607. FO/371/2137.

* For background see R.J.Kerner, "The Mission of Liman von Sanders" Slavonic Review, 6 (1927-8) pp.12-27, 344-63, 543-60. 7(1928)90-112.

2. Mallet to Grey, 30.10.13, tel.no.350.BD.ibid. no.376. Goschen to Grey 1.11.13. no.400.ibid. no.377. Goschen to Nicolson, 19.11.13. Pte.NP.371.

unwilling to accept this interpretation, and admitted only the Armenian provinces as a Russian sphere. But Nicolson could not resist adding:

Owing to the very poor show which the Turks made during the war it might perhaps be argued by a cynical observer that there was no greater unkindness to show to the Turks than to entrust their troops to German leadership and instruction. 1.

The whole question displayed how it was now impossible any more to draw a distinct line between reform and the Powers' intrigues. This was precisely what Britain was trying to avoid by her persistent attempts to continue the Concert policy towards the Porte. But the realities of the Triple Entente were too harsh to be ignored. This was the case not only when administrative reform was in question, as demonstrated by the Armenian reform, but also military reform as in the Liman von Sanders' affair.

In an attempt to evict the Germans from Constantinople the Russians suggested that Smyrna be made Liman's headquarters but the French maintained that this would not meet their own or Britain's objections. The French would resist the location of the German command in Syria in general, and in Palestine the British would particularly reject a German command in such close proximity to Egypt. The conclusion was that only Adrianople could be accepted as the location of the German command. 2.

However, O'Beirne, the British Charge in St Petersburg, much as he sympathised with the Russian apprehensions, would only denounce Sazonov's attitude as "impotent annoyance". He referred to Sazonov's suggested counteractions, the demand for a Russian General to command the Ottoman troops at Bayazid, as of "no definite" character. What could be more effective, to O'Beirne's mind, was to inform the Porte that as long as the German General was in command Russia would insist on keeping one or two ships there which might be called upon to land troops should the occasion

1. Goschen to Nicolson, 19.11.13. Pte. ibid. Nicolson to Goschen, 24.11.13. Pte. ibid. Grey to Bertie, 24.11.13. no.713. BD. ibid. no. 378

2. Goschen to Nicolson, 25.11.13. Pte. NP. 371.

which they had exposed their country by appointing Liman to command the capital thus making him the "absolute master of the situation" as he would be able, as Goschen said, to intervene in internal politics.¹ As Vansittart put it, the Liman affair presented Britain not with just another crisis which threatened to strengthen German influence in the Ottoman Empire, but also with the need to restrain the scramble for "equivalents" which Russia and France had too easily joined.²

Sazonov, however, decided to make the Liman affair "a test of the value" of the Triple Entente. Germany, so he believed, would especially dread the British fleet. In the Foreign Office such an idea could find little enthusiasm: "Dangerous possibilities" commented Clerk. Grey had much more moderate views as to what the Entente should do. He was prepared only to go as far as an identical but not a collective representation of the Entente Ambassadors to the Porte, to show to the Ottomans that they were "in accord". The Porte should be told that the unique powers thus given to Liman would place the corps diplomatique, the key of the Straits and the sovereignty of the Sultan, all in the mercy of German power. The equilibrium of the Powers which guaranteed the existence of the Ottoman Empire would thus be destroyed. Other Powers would join the scramble to obtain similar positions and the Porte would be unable to refuse. But he was not ready to go beyond that because the Liman affair was

a matter of more intimate concern to Russia than to

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1. O'Beirne to Grey, 29.11.13. tel. no. 395. Minute by Nicolson, 29.11. BD ibid. no. 383. (Minute by Vansittart, FO/371/1847). Goschen to Nicolson, 25.11.13. Pte. op.cit.
 2. O'Beirne to Grey, 26.11.13. no.367. ibid. no.380. (Minute by Vansittart, 1.12.FO/371/1847) Fichon, however, claimed that France disliked any compensation which might entail the beginning of the partition of the Ottoman Empire. Granville to Grey, 29.11.13, no.588. ibid. no.384. But Cambon, the French Ambassador in London, as Crowe noted, spoke in a different voice. Grey to Bertie, 28.11.13. no.772. Minute by Crowe, 2.12. in: Granville to Grey, 29.11.13. no.588. op.cit.

any of us. It is therefore not a question in which we can be influenced by their apprehension of how far Russian remonstrances are likely to be carried than by fear of British action. 1.

Mallet, whom Nicolson described to Goschen as doing "exceedingly well" and to have already established "a good position" in the Ottoman capital, could now tell the Foreign Office that Liman would have executive control over the Constantinople Army Corps.² Lieut.-Col. Tyrrell, the British Military Attaché at Constantinople minimized, according to Mallet, the importance of the German mission. The Attaché, he felt was rather inclined to accept the version put forward to him by Izzet Pasha, the Minister of War, who denied that the mission would have the powers attributed to it in the papers. On the other hand Tyrrell indicated that Liman would be assisted by Major von Stremple, the German Military Attaché, who had intimate connections with Enver, and through him with other German-trained officers who belonged to the CUP. He was, nevertheless, inclined to explain that though Germany would not gain militarily from the mission, it would certainly gain commercially and politically. As to the question why the Porte had invited the new mission although the German military reputation had suffered such a disastrous blow in the Balkan Wars, Tyrrell explained this by the fact that the German Government had not prevented its officers from taking an active part in the recent war which had made "a most favourable" impression on the Ottoman army. Secondly, Tyrrell maintained, the coming of the Liman mission was arranged by the Ottoman Government under the direction of a pro-German "clique of officers and others", who had already during 1910-11 given a German direction to Ottoman policy. 3.

1. O'Beirne to Grey, 1.12.13. tel.no.398. Secret. ibid.no.385. (Clerk's Minute, 2.12. FO/371/1847) Grey to Mallet, 2.12.13, tel.no.557.ibid. no.387. Grey to O'Beirne, 2.12.13. tel.no.780.ibid. no.388.

2. Mallet to Grey, 2.12.13. tel.no.598. ibid.no.389. Nicolson to Goschen, 24.11.13. Pte. op.cit. Mallet to Grey, 2.12.13. Pte.GP.80.

3. Tyrrell to Mallet, 2.12.13. no.41, in: Mallet to Grey, 2.12.13. no 982 ibid. no. 391.

In the Foreign Office however there was also a tendency to minimize the importance of the Liman affair. Sazonov could not of course be told of the feelings of Nicolson who was disinclined to "pull the chestnuts out of the fire for Russia". Nevertheless the question put Britain in an ambiguous position. On the one hand they were ready to admit that the appointment was of "a very serious nature", on the other Nicolson was not quite sure that the danger which it involved was not "more apparent than real". But even if the danger was real Nicolson was still afraid of Britain looking "rather foolish" if she took up the question "warily" and then found that she had been deserted by Sazonov, for no one ever knew how far the Russian Foreign Minister was prepared to go. Neither could Nicolson believe, as he wrote to O'Beirne, that Russia was looking forward to a crisis with Germany, nor that the Ottoman army could be easily controlled by a German officer. Britain was not yet prepared to adopt the Russian version of Ottoman-German relations. Yet Nicolson admitted to Goschen that

. . . the Turks are exceedingly foolish to have agreed to place the garrison of their capital under the command of a foreigner, as if the latter really succeeds in obtaining the confidence of the troops he is practically master of the whole situation and would be able to depose Sultans and upset Governments. Moreover it would place Germany in a position of preponderating influence at Constantinople, and I do not think that any of us would view this situation with great complacency. 1.

Mallet also took a moderate line in the Liman affair, contrary to his colleagues. He warned that if a friendly settlement was not to be achieved the question of compensation might then arise and open up questions like a Russian demand to open up the Straits or Limas' command of the Ottoman navy. But he did not deny that the German command might be dangerous to Britain in Egypt and the Persian Gulf if the German General was able to gain the same confidence as Crawford had gained in his post, and thus acquire a "very powerful" position. In the Foreign Office Mallet's

1. Nicolson to O'Beirne, 2.12.13, Pte., *ibid*, no. 393. Nicolson to Goschen, 2.12.13, Pte., NP, 371.

"forceful" arguments were appreciated, particularly on the question of Limpus' command though Limpus commanded a rather "inefficient" navy and only in time of peace. The possibility that the Porte or the Germans might use Limpus' command as an argument now caused Grey to go "very carefully" and to pay less attention than Russia and France to the new information that Liman would also occupy the position of the Vice-President of the Supreme Ottoman Military Council.¹

Mallet also felt that Britain could not say too much about her claim for compensation not only because of Limpus' command but also because of the monopoly given by the Porte to Vickers and Armstrong to build arsenals and dockyards in the Ottoman Empire except on the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea. The Foreign Office, however, maintained that neither Limpus' command nor the Vickers-Armstrong concession was on the same footing as Liman's command. Mallet was anxious not only that the Ottoman navy should remain under British control but also that the Ottoman Government should not be weakened by the question of compensation:

. . . in my opinion [he wrote to Grey] they deserve encouragement and what sympathy we can give them. I think it remarkable that they should have come out as well as they have considering what they have gone through the last 2 years. The mere work which they do is colossal . . . 2.

Mallet assisted by Tyrrell, his Military Attaché, attempted to persuade the Foreign Office not to support the Russian version of the situation. Thus Tyrrell claimed that the really important and supreme body of the Ottoman army was not the Supreme Military Council but the General Staff. But the Foreign Office had in any case decided that they could not object to Liman's membership of the Supreme Military Council because von der Goltz had previously occupied this position.³

Sazonov was again trying to push Britain to agree to extreme measures

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1. Mallet to Grey, 5.12.13. tel.no.603. Minutes, 6.12. ibid. no.403
Grey to Mallet, 4.12.13. tel.no.560. ibid. no.398.
 2. Mallet to Grey, 5.12.13. Pte. ibid.no. 405. Same to same. 6.11.13.tel.no. 550. Same to same. 3.12.13. tel.no.599. Minutes, same to same. 8.12.13. Pte. NP.371
 3. Tyrrell to Mallet. 4.12.13. no.43.in: Mallet to Grey.4.12.13. no.987. Minute 9.12. ibid. no. 402.

against the Porte by financial pressure, refusal of the 4% increase, the rupture of diplomatic relations, and if necessary the occupation of Ottoman ports in the Mediterranean and Black Sea by the Entente. But nothing was so far from the minds of the Foreign Office than taking part in the Russian plan. Crowe explained this attitude by saying that this could "entirely" upset the "general line" of British policy in the Ottoman Empire. ^{1.} Whatever this policy was it was not yet what Mallet wished it to be. He was proud that he had got on "very well" with the Ministers whom he had met and liked. He added:

They are all most friendly and sincerely anxious to have one's goodwill. It is only natural that they should like us for anything more vulture-like than the Representatives of the other Powers it is impossible to conceive. From the point of view of our material interests, I do not know whether we shall suffer or not for our want of interest in this country. But it must be remembered that all the other Powers are busy pegging out claims, and the best justification of our attitude of aloofness would be the maintenance of the integrity of the Ottoman Dominions. If we can do anything to help that, all the better. ^{2.}

What Mallet meant by helping the maintenance of Ottoman integrity was that Britain should avoid taking part in any compensation policy which might be formulated, as the French stated, in the event of the Porte's refusal to give way in the question of Liman's command. But as Vansittart revealed Britain knew very well that she could not obtain any such "compensation" since she already had Liman's command. Hence the Foreign Office's refusal of Mallet's suggestion of mediation in the Liman question by preferring Adrianople or reducing his position to that of an Adviser, and the avoidance of representations to the Porte, in favour of verbal enquiry. Britain's refusal actively to participate in any attempt to find a solution to the question of the German command also stemmed from the belief that it was not an encroachment on British interests. Any participation would be

1. O'Beirne to Grey. 7.12.13. tel. no. 404. Minutes. ibid. no. 406.
Nicolson to Mallet, 8.12.13. Pte. NP. 371.

2. Mallet to Nicolson, 8.12.13. Pte. NP. 371.

"dangerous", and a British demand for further "compensation" would bring upon her the Porte's odium. ^{1.}

Now that the Limpus' command was associated with Liman's even Mallet was forced to agree that Britain might soon face a dilemma between reform and her own interests. He felt that up till now Limpus' command had been clearly seen as a reform question, but the Liman affair now made it appear as a purely British interest. It would have been better if this "big question" had not been raised so that Britain could continue to play the role of "the only Power which really desires the reform and the integrity of the Empire". Since it had been raised Mallet continued, it might be better for Limpus to give up the title of the commander of the navy, while retaining the real power. ^{2.} Mallet still found it necessary for Britain to pay lip service to the overworked idea of integrity and reform, though his sincerity, naive as it might well be, was greater than that of the Foreign Office.

Sazonov was "deeply disappointed and upset" that Britain was not ready to go beyond verbal enquiry, while he was quite sure that Germany would give way if faced with the "decided stand" of the Entente, strengthened by the British fleet. If Britain was not ready to follow up Russia's policy, Sazonov warned, they would have to reconsider the value of the Entente. O'Beirne also warned that Russia was preparing for a "definite change" in her attitude towards Britain. The Foreign Office stood very firm in their refusal to support the "extreme" measures of the "wobbly" Russian Foreign Minister. ^{3.}

1. Mallet to Grey, 10.12.13. tel. no.609.BD.ibid. no.414. (Minute by Vansittart, 11.12. FO/371/1847) Grey to Mallet, 9.12.13.tel.no.570.ibid no.408.

2. Mallet to Grey, 11.12.13. tel. no. 613. ibid. no.416.

3.O'Beirne to Nicolson, 11.12.13. Pte.ibid. no.418. O'Beirne to Grey, 13.12.13. tel. no.441. Minute by Vansittart, 15.12. ibid. no.425. Same to same, 14.12.13. tel.no.413. Minute by Vansittart. 15.12. ibid. no.429. Same to same, 9.12.13. no.375.Minutes by Vansittart and Crowe 15.12. ibid. no.412.

Although Nicolson regarded the Liman affair as "exceedingly tiresome", he was a "little nervous" lest Britain's refusal to support Russia's policy in this question would badly affect their "intimate friendship". But no one in the Foreign Office seemed to be impressed with Sazonov's belief that the CUP had called in the German mission because of their insecure position. ^{1.}

The Foreign Office was also unwilling to agree to Mallet's suggestion of a diminution in Limpus' powers, in return for allowing retired British officers to command the Ottoman navy in time of war. No wonder the Foreign Office wished the Liman affair could be settled directly between Germany and Russia without involving a British concession over Limpus' command. To serve that end Grey was ready to accept a Russian suggestion that Limpus' command and residence should be transferred to Ismid if this was practicable and consistent with "performance of his duties" and if the Porte agreed. ^{2.}

Said Halim was, however, "upset and agitated" by the verbal enquiry. He said that he had not expected Britain to place him in the embarrassing position of questioning the independence of the Ottoman Government, namely its undoubted authority over the German General. He asked whether Limpus or any of his predecessors, who had in his opinion, exercised a similar if not a more extensive command, had ever controlled the Porte. Mallet replied that the command of the navy was "very different" from that of the army. Mallet succeeded in explaining to Limpus that the "nominal" change to the status of Adviser would avoid "the opening up of some big questions". But he warned, and this was accepted by the Foreign Office, that if Britain

1. Nicolson to Townley. 15.12.13. Pte.NP.371. O'Beirne to Nicolson. 11.12.13 op.cit.

2. Mallet to Grey, 12.12.13.tel.no.617. Minute by Vansittart, ibid. no.419
Grey to Mallet, 12.12.13.tel.no.577. ibid. no. 420

failed the Porte in effecting reform they might apply "elsewhere", namely Germany. 1.

Mallet could certainly find support for his belief in the sincerity of Ottoman reform in the CUP press. The "Tasvir-i-Evkiar" was "unreasonable and violent" in its tone against the attempt of the "Christian Powers of Europe" to "strangle the Moslem and Turkish East." Mallet, who was afraid lest the "more chauvinistic" wing of the CUP provoke some extreme action, suggested the Foreign Office avoid any action which would intensify ill-feeling. 2. In mid-December Nicolson admitted that if all Ottoman officers passed through Liman's model corps then "the whole patronage of the army will be in German hands - an enormous lever in Germany's favour". 3. But this was quite an isolated opinion. Generally speaking the Foreign Office refused to think, as Russia did, in terms of Triple Entente versus Triple Alliance. What they wanted to see was the settlement of this "unfortunate business" which they always regarded as a Russian-German matter. As Grey admitted to Lichnowsky, the German Ambassador, the British fear was that the Liman command might provoke the Russians to ask for a command of their own in the Eastern Vilayets, and then the break-up of the Ottoman Empire would begin. But in fact she was more concerned lest her position in the Ottoman navy would be affected. 4.

Reluctantly, however, Britain had to state her readiness to a modification in Liman's status if this was required to solve the Liman

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1. Mallet to Grey, 13.12.13. tel.no. 621. ibid. no.426. Same to same, 14.12.13. tel.no.623. Minute, 15.12. ibid. no..428. Same to same, 15.12.13, no. 1010, ibid. no.433.
 2. Mallet to Grey, 10.12.13. no.998. (Article from 5.12.) Minute by Vansittart, 15.12.
 3. Mallet to Grey, 15.12.13.tel.no.628. Minutes by Nicolson and Vansittart, 16.12. ibid. no.430
 4. Grey to Goschen, 15.12.13. no.366.ibid.no. 431.

affair. But she was certainly even more reluctant to see Russia following a "deplorable and wrong-headed" policy of occupying Bayazid and Erzeroun. Both Buchanan and Crowe warned against what could be a dangerous bluff on the part of Russia since Crowe wrote Germany might threaten to support the Porte in a war with Russia. Britain and France should put this possibility to Sazonov before both could be expected to commit themselves to support such a move. Grey, however, decided in favour of the much easier "wait and see" policy for the meantime for ". . . the more time gained the better."¹ The main aim of British policy was to escape the dilemma of having to choose between her vital friendship with Russia and the danger of being involved in a European war. "We naturally are most anxious", Nicolson wrote to Goschen, "that nothing should arise which would affect our exceedingly friendly relations with Russia". But Goschen himself viewed "with horror" the Liman affair. He warned that out of the two governments ruling Germany the military had the upper hand over the civilian and therefore he could hear "the thunder in the distance".²

From Constantinople Admiral Limpus was trying to persuade the British Government that they should not allow his position to be diminished, since the Ottomans were really willing to introduce reforms.³ He defended the failure to do so hitherto ascribing it to the "intensely conservative" oriental mind, underpayment of the Ottoman officials and the fact that the Advisers lacked full power to enforce their advice. He asked whether the Powers really meant to help the Porte or wished her to collapse "in the strenuous race of modern progress". So far as he himself was concerned he was sure that "from a much higher standpoint than that of material interests we are bound to help a sorely stricken nation to regain health

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1. Grey to O'Beirne, 16.12.13, tel. no.803, ibid.,no.434. Buchanan to Grey 19.12.13, tel.no.417. Minutes by Vansittart and Crowe, 20.12.ibid.no.440
 2. Nicolson to Goschen, 16.12.13. Pte.NP.371. Goschen to Grey, 19.12.13. Pte. ibid. no.441. O'Beirne to Grey, 18.12.13. no. 384.ibid./no.439.
 3. On Limpus' appointment in 1912 see:Admiralty to Foreign Office, 21.2.12. FO/371/1487/7709. Lowther to Grey, 3.3.12. no.42. Minutes 4.3. Churchill to Grey, 7.3.12, ibid./10647/ Lowther to Grey, 19.3.12. tel.no.67. Report by Admiral Williams 29.4.12. Minute 30.5.FO/371/1487/22853.

and reasonable prosperity and good government". No wonder Limpus was "astonished" to see that his idea of reconstructing the Ottoman dockyard through a British concern was looked upon not as a "tremendous" gain for the Porte but as "a point scored" by Britain against the other Powers. No wonder also that Limpus favoured giving full powers to the German General, whose work he regarded as one of reform devoid of any political implications. If Liman were found misusing his powers, there would be "time enough" to remove him or to curtail his powers. Limpus' appeal to the British Government that the Ottoman Empire was "worth preserving from extinction" and that "the work can be done", did not pass without notice in the Foreign Office. Vansittart agreed that the diminution of Limpus' powers would make "a very bad impression" on the Ottomans and hoped that the settlement of the Liman affair would not result in this. Crowe also approved of Limpus' arguments, but Grey regarded the question purely as one of realpolitik: Britain would not change Limpus' status in order to be in a better position to support Russia, but if Germany and the Porte would make the reduction of Liman's status conditional upon the diminution of Limpus' powers then Britain might agree.¹ Limpus in fact represented the Ottoman point of view which was given in a leading article in the "Tanin" on 15th December. It was ominous for Britain for she was identified with Russia's policy:

. . . All these démarches [made by the Entente] or supposed to be made for the sake of our independence. We call this being more royalist than the king; these three Powers have become more Ottoman than the Ottomans and are giving us lessons in patriotism . . . We wonder in which of their statements, in which of their standards, in which of their balances we ought to believe . . . Even if this army corps reached the highest degree of perfection, how can it threaten Russia? To be able to imagine our army seriously threatening Russia, a miracle is necessary such as the crossing of the Black Sea by our soldiers on prayer carpets. 2.

1. Limpus to Mallet, 11.12.13. Greene (Admiralty) to Crowe, 24.12.13. Minutes, 29-30.12. FO/371/1847/57988.

2. Mallet to Grey, 21.12.13. no.1025.

Gray was afraid that an Entente action in Berlin might create a new and dangerous situation: a diplomatic conflict between the Triple Alliance and the Triple Entente, and he added:

. . . the question should not be allowed to assume this form unless Russia is prepared to make it a casus belli, and I do not believe it is worth that, or that the modification needed to make it not worth that cannot be secured by patient pressure without demonstration. . . 1.

The final and real solution seemed to be in sight on 30 December, when Germany showed readiness to give way over the question of Liman's command over the 1st Army Corps and to appoint him to Inspector General without special command. Jagow, the German Secretary for Foreign Affairs, promised Goschen that any interference of German officers in Ottoman politics was "absolutely" out of the question and in the event of a revolution in Constantinople they would "retire into the background", leaving the duty of restoring order to the Ottoman officers. In the Foreign Office there was no doubt of the sincerity of the German promises. The main goal was to achieve a settlement and this was coming through. 2.

Sazonov, however, was again unsuccessful in his attempts to persuade Britain to subscribe to his policy. The Foreign Office refused to take up even the first step suggested by Russia: namely to sacrifice her agreement with the Porte in order to use the 4% customs increase as a weapon. Britain was assisted in her refusal by France, who was very reluctant to sacrifice her great financial investments in the Ottoman Empire for the sake of the Russian interests in the Liman affair. 3.

In mid-January Nicolson became convinced that the Czar, who was after all the ultimate authority in foreign affairs, would never allow the Entente

1. Buchanan to Gray, 21.12.13. tel.no.419. Minutes, ibid. no.443. Same to same, 23.12.13. no.391. ibid., no.446. Mallet to Gray, 23.12.13. tel. no. 638. ibid. no.444. Same to same, 27.12.13, tel.no.640. Minutes by Grove and Gray, 29.12.13. ibid., no.452. Gray to Goschen, 2.1.14. Pte. ibid., no.457.

2. Goschen to Gray, 31.12.13. Pte. ibid. no.455. Same to same, 1.1.14. tel.no. 1. Minute by Clerk, 2.1. ibid. no. 456.

3. Buchanan to Gray, 8.1.14. tel.no.6. Minutes by Gray and Nicolson, 9.1. ibid. no.465. Bertie to Gray, 11.1.14. no.19. conf. ibid. no. 466.

Buchanan to Gray, 8.1.14. tel.no.6. Minutes by Gray and Nicolson, 9.1. ibid. no.465

to be affected by such a question. He was no more frightened by Sazonov whom he found "tiresome" and "somewhat excitable, and like many weak men occasionally irritable and fractious. Too great weight need not be attached to his opinions".^{1.}

But meanwhile a solution was found at last by which Liman was promoted to a Marshal in the Ottoman army and thus could not command the 1st Army Corps; instead he was appointed Inspector-General of the Army.^{2.} Britain was considerably relieved that the Liman affair was settled. Nevertheless, Nicolson felt that Liman's new position as Inspector General of the Ottoman Army would be "equally, if not more, influential" than that of the Commander of the 1st Army Corps. Grey thought that the "intrinsic" importance of the German General's command had been "very much" exaggerated.^{3.} Once the German-Russian conflict over the Liman affair was settled the British Government took little notice of Liman's activities. In March the British Military Attaché at Constantinople reported that 47 officers were serving in the German Military Mission and that this total, was not final. Many of their positions were, moreover, of considerable importance and they were given "executive functions" not only around the capital but also in different parts of the Empire. The Foreign Office was interested only in the discrepancies between the numbers of officers given by the Military Attaché in Berlin and Constantinople. After the crisis it hardly occurred to the British that the Germans would use the Military Mission to increase their political grip on the Ottoman Empire.^{4.}

1. Nicolson to Hardinge, 15.1.14. Pte.NP.372. Nicolson to Goschen, 19.1.14 Pte. ibid.

2. Mallet to Grey 15.1.14. tel.no.30. Memo by Tyrrell, 15.1.14. FO/371/1847/2739. Buchanan to Nicolson, 21.1.14. Pte. ibid., no.469. Mallet to Grey, 24.1.14. tel.no.57. Minute, ibid., no.470.

3. Nicolson to Goschen, 19.1.14. Pte. op.cit. Grey to Buchanan. 11.2.14. Pte. ibid., no.474.

4. Lieut.-Col. Cunliffe-Owen to Mallet, 24.3.14 in: Mallet to Grey 24.3.14. no.201. Minute by Russell, 30.3. Lieut.-Col. Russell to Goschen, in: Goschen to Grey, 28.3.14. No.134. U.Trumpener "Liman von Sanders and the German-Ottoman Alliance" Journal of Contemporary History, (1966) pp. 179-92.

e. The Aegean Islands, the Ottoman Navy and the Entente

The most difficult, and indeed "exceedingly complicated and troublesome" question of the period under discussion was the future of the Aegean Islands. This started in April 1912 when Italy occupied Stampalia followed in May by the occupation of Rhodes and the rest of the Dodecanese. It was much aggravated when in late November 1912 Greece occupied Mitylene, Chios and the rest of the Aegean Islands. Britain, who had taken a pro-Greek attitude from the beginning of the Balkan war still held that except for Tenedos and Imbros all the Islands should be retained by Greece to avoid a repetition of the Cretan question. If the Porte reoccupied the Islands of Chios and Mitylene Britain would expect all the Powers to take common action against the Ottomans. ^{1.}

For Mallet the question of the Islands was of particular importance as he was soon to discover that it could endanger his plan of opening a new era in Britain's relations with the Porte. He quickly learned that this was a question of "life and death" for the Porte. Said Halim made it clear to him that they would fight unless the Powers decided in their favour and would not hear about autonomy. Mallet took the Grand Vizier's threats most seriously and told the Foreign Office that a solution unfavourable to them would not be accepted. In order to impress the Foreign Office he mentioned the opinion of the Bulgarian Minister to the Porte who also hoped that the Powers would decide in the Ottomans' favour. He noticed, however, that the Porte was supported by both the German and Austrian Ambassadors while the Russian had not yet committed himself. He hoped that it would not be made a cause for division between the Triple Entente and the Triple Alliance, which might force Britain to adopt a hostile attitude to the Porte. It was, moreover, typical of Mallet to comment as follows:

1. Gray to Dering, 29.10.13, no. 262, ibid., no.154.

That [a hostile British attitude] would really be the last straw so far as our influence here is concerned. The Turks have received several shocks in the last two years and will not stand much more. On the whole they are pleased with Mr Asquith's last speech, but a little shy and inclined to contrast it with his Salonica and Adrianople speeches . . . 1.

An anti-Ottoman decision, claimed Mallet, would render Britain unpopular and the war with Greece to which it would lead would endanger the "vital" reform work in the Asiatic provinces. But Mallet's interpretation of the situation was rejected by the Foreign Office. The financial difficulties and suspension of all loans by France was likely to help to avoid war. Clerk did not believe that Germany would exert any pressure on the Porte. He thought that the Ottomans would get used to the Powers' unfavourable decision, as it would not be unexpected. He certainly did not take seriously the Porte's threats to go to war since "there is a long road between Turkish speech and action. 2.

Mallet was still convinced that he could change his Government's views, although by now, mid-December, he had also realised that "All the Powers including ourselves, are trying hard to get what they can out of Turkey. They all profess to wish the maintenance of Turkey's integrity but no one ever thinks of this in practice." Nevertheless, he thought it was "much" against Britain's interests to allow the present Ottoman Government to collapse because of hostile Powers' attitude. He suggested they help the Porte in every possible way and not starve them financially since they might be tempted to cancel the Debt revenues instead. Mallet's attitude clearly stemmed from his high opinion on the Young Turks' leadership, which he considered as "very energetic to say the least of it". But they were also desperate and might react over the

1. Mallet to Grey, 4.11.13. Pte. op.cit Same to same, 25.11.13. Pte. ibid. no. 165 Asquith's speech in Guildhall, 10.11. "The Times" 11.11. p.10. Asquith expressed satisfaction that Ottoman Asia was not involved in the Balkan wars since its integrity was important to Britain. It included the Holy Places for the Empire's moslem subjects. He also wished to see no invasion of its territory and did not forget to mention reform.

2. Mallet to Grey, 17.12.13. no. 1018. ibid. no. 173. Minutes, 23.12.

Islands question as they had reacted over Adrianople. Mallet reminded Grey of the promise the latter had given him before he left Britain that he would not take any initiative in the question of the Islands. He clearly saw his Ambassadorship as of special importance and was afraid lest the Islands question would spoil it.

My own position, however, except in so far as British interests are concerned, is not of importance, but I shall feel very uncomfortable with the Grand Vizier and Talaat, who have confidence in my good will, and whom I have been endeavouring to persuade of British sincerity and friendship, if HMG have made proposals unfavourable to Turkey. 1.

The Foreign Office's idea was to keep its pro-Greek attitude as a secret, especially from Mallet, since he might be asked embarrassing questions by the Ottomans. The publication in the "Temps" of the Powers' anti-Ottoman decision made impossible its continuation as a secret. No wonder Mallet was angered and complained that it placed him in a "false position". He claimed that Britain's initiative had "very much upset" the Porte and was regarded as "a very great moral blow" to them, and considered it as inconsistent with the recent statements by the British Government, since it was so "injurious" to Ottoman integrity. 2. But the Foreign Office was neither deterred by the Porte's reaction nor ready to accept the Italian criticism that giving away the Islands to the Greeks would create another Macedonia because of the presence of Greek-Ottomans on the littoral. 3.

Surprisingly Mallet told Said Halim that even he did not know about the British proposal, trying to persuade the bitterly disillusioned Grand Vizier that Mitylene and Chios would only be a source of weakness to the

1. Same to same, 17.12.13. Pte. ibid. no.174.

2. Same to same, 17.12.13. tel. no.631. Minute by Crowe, 18.12. Grey to Mallet 20.12.13. tel.no.587. ibid.,no.177. Grey to Mallet, 16.12.13.no.461 ibid.,no.171. Mallet to Grey,19.12.13.tel.no.634. ibid.no.175.

3. Mallet to Grey, 16.12.13, no.1011, ibid. no.172. Minutes,23.12. FO/371/1804.

Porte, since they would aspire for unification with Greece like Crete. Said Halim replied that the population, unlike the Cretan one, was "peaceful and commercial". He went on to speak most bitterly about the attitude of Britain, in whom the Porte no longer had confidence. Britain, like the other Powers, did not want the Ottoman Empire to be regenerated but destroyed. This was exemplified not only by the Islands question, but also by the financial starvation, by refusing to send officials to reform the provinces and by their attitude to the German Military Mission. Mallet "deeply" regretted the impression of the unfriendliness of the British Government, adding that the Porte itself was responsible for some of its troubles.¹

Grey felt that he should appease Mallet's somewhat injured feelings. He explained to him that initially he had not intended to take the initiative about transferring the Islands from the Porte to Greece, but this became necessary as "the only chance" of avoiding "catastrophe" over South Albania. Greece, he maintained, had to be compensated for her loss of Korytza and Stylos in that area by obtaining the Islands:

I am full of compunction at not having told you and explained it all to you beforehand and I realise what this may have added to your difficulties, and if the results are untoward at Constantinople they shall go to my account, not to yours.

He promised Mallet that Britain had introduced a condition that the Powers should pledge to the Porte that Greece would not allow smuggling and that Italy should return the Islands she had occupied.²

If Mallet was easily appeased, this was not the case with the Porte, who regarded Mitylene and Chios as part of the mainland and therefore strategically vital. Said Halim refused to accept the British explanations

1. Same to same, 22.12.13. tel.no.637, ibid. no.178.Minutes,23.12. FO/371/1805.

2. Grey to Mallet,23.12.13. Pte. ibid.,no.180. Same to same,24.12.13 Pte.tel. ibid.,no.181. Mallet to Grey, 24.12.13. Pte.GP.80.

as he was convinced that Britain had as in the case of Adrianople, once more decided on a hostile policy. ^{1.} In the Foreign Office, however, it was well understood that the Porte could recapture Mitylene and Chios only if they could confront the Greek fleet. Already as early as June Grey had felt that it was "folly" and ruin for the Porte to spend millions on the Dreadnoughts they had intended to buy. The Admiralty thought it would be more economic for the Porte if they would rely merely on the army in their defence policy and exchange the navy for a flotilla of torpedoes and submarines. The Ottomans did not have trade or other interests to defend at distance and therefore did not need big ships which might also threaten Britain's "vital Mediterranean interest" should the Porte become hostile in the future. ^{2.} This attitude had already been apparent in December 1912, when the Admiralty expressed its apprehension lest the "formidable" battleship "Mahmud Reshad V" then being built in Britain, might pass to Germany in the future, and thus "seriously" effect the relative strength of the British navy. ^{3.} The Foreign Office, however, deplored the possibility that the Porte was about to buy big ships mainly because of the more immediate danger that it would be "a direct incitement" to them to seize Chios and Mitylene. The most persistent rumour was of the purchase of the big Brazilian battleship "Rio de Janeiro", (subsequently the "Sultan Osman"). Nicolson hoped that the ship would not be ready before the Spring and that it would be possible to find a solution to the "exceedingly troublesome" Islands question in the interim. ^{4.}

1. Same to same, 24.12.13. no.1034.

2. Lowther to Grey, 7.6.13, no.514. Minute, 11.6. Admiralty to Foreign Office 10.7.13., conf. FO/371/1781/31917. Grey to Lowther, 24.7.13. no.229.

3. Admiralty to Foreign Office, 10.12.12. FO/371/1522/52889.

4. Mallet to Grey, 14.12.13. tel. no.626. Minute by Crowe, 15.12. Same to same 24.12.13, no.1030, Minute, 31.12. Same to same, 31.12.13, tel. no.646. Nicolson to Mallet, 8.12.13. Pte. NP.371. Nicolson to Goschen, 16.12.13. Pte. ibid., de Bunsen to Grey, 1.1.14, no.1, conf. Minute by Norman, 5.1. BD. ibid. no. 188.

But there was no indication that the Porte would follow the Foreign Office's advice to concentrate on building a flotilla instead of a fleet. Moreover, the Porte were fully supported in this view by Admiral Limpus who also rejected the advice, with "a decided negative" when speaking to Mallet: "If the Greeks had super-Dreadnoughts the Turks must keep ahead of them. It is apparently a case of two keels to one . . ." 1. Mallet was inclined to support his Government's point of view rather than that of the Porte and Limpus. In a conversation with Jemal, he tried to persuade him that the Porte would be unable to stand the financial strain of building a fleet, and warned him that they would arouse the jealousy of a certain Power if they would go too quickly in the matter of a fleet. Jemal took up the challenge at once and asked Mallet if this meant that Britain was not serious about the fleet which she had taken upon herself to reorganise and improve. Mallet told him that they should devote themselves for the "regeneration" of the country, improving the conditions of the people and developing the economic resources of the country which would provide them a "solid basis" to build upon. But Jemal insisted that the Ottoman Empire without Adrianople and the Islands was "like a room with doors open to robbers and malefactors". He went on to say that the Ottoman fleet would be to Britain's advantage since it would always fight on her side and help to maintain the balance of power in the Mediterranean against the growing power of Italy. 2.

Although Mallet did not change his view that people like Talaat and Jemal were the "best" men that the Ottoman Empire could have, and was impressed with their "straightforwardness", still he realised more than before the gravity of the situation:

There are so many excitements here and they succeed each other in such rapidity, and are so violent whilst they last, that one requires a period of acclimatization

1. Mallet to Grey, 27.10.13. tel. no. 525.

2. Mallet to Grey, 29.12.13. no.1048, conf. BD. op.cit.

before settling down. I expect a crisis every morning [he wrote to Nicolson on the last day of 1913] now, almost as regularly as my boiled egg.

It seemed, moreover, that Jemal, and perhaps Limpus too, persuaded him that since the Porte was determined to build a fleet and not a flotilla that they should be allowed to go their own way:

It is something of a dilemma. I think we must go on now we have begun and let our naval men do their best for them; if we don't some other Powers will step into our shoes. 1.

The Foreign Office, however, did not show the slightest readiness to change its opinion. The Porte tried therefore to protest again against the Powers decision. This was refuted by Crowe, with Tewfik's acquiescence on the formal grounds that the Porte had unconditionally accepted the principle that the Powers would decide the Islands' fate, and that it could not be separated from the questions of South Albania and the islands occupied by Italy. 2.

Since the main difficulty between the Powers was that of the Islands Nicolson's idea was to avoid a rift and achieve a common accord. He felt that the Powers might find it necessary to exercise "real" pressure on the Porte. It would be "unfortunate" if they should again be unable to show firm decision. He was ready to initiate a collective guarantee for Greece against a possible coup de main on the part of the Porte. This, if agreed by the Powers, which was itself doubtful, could have a restraining influence upon the Porte. 3. He even suggested the imposition of financial control on the Porte if they continued with their aggressive attitude towards Greece. He did not realise that the Porte was not ready for war, since apart from the financial difficulties the Ottomans were

1. Mallet to Nicolson, 31.12.13. Pte. NP. 371.

2. Communication from Tewfik, 30.12.13. Minutes by Crowe and Grey, ibid. no.186

3. Nicolson to Buchanan, 27.1.14. Pte. NP.372. Nicolson to de Bunsen, 19.1.14. Pte. ibid. Nicolson to Mallet, 19.1.14. Pte. ibid.

powerless at sea and in a bad military position in Thrace. ^{1.}

In any case the Ottomans could never convince the Foreign Office of the righteousness of their course over the Islands. The Porte's views were regarded as "Moonshine". Crowe rejected the Porte's argument that Greek rule in the Islands was bound to promote irredentist propaganda on the mainland, and indeed thought the reverse, that the mainland Greeks would support the Islanders as long as they were under Ottoman rule. Crowe could not believe that the Greeks had any territorial ambitions on the Ottoman mainland. Furthermore he believed that the Greeks living in the Ottoman Empire were business-minded rather than Greek nationalists. He regarded the Porte as the danger-point. Once they had won a naval victory they would not be satisfied with the Islands alone. ^{2.} Crowe did not exclude the possibility of the Powers sending their fleets. He was quite prepared to support such a policy if the six Powers were willing to act together. ^{3.}

There was also another reason for the Foreign Office's anxiety over a possible war between the Porte and Greece. This was the danger of Ottoman-Bulgarian collusion, rumours of which were repeatedly reported by Mallet. It increased the threat to Greece and led to the growing belief in the Foreign Office that the Powers would have to use force against the Porte. This was now a common theme in the Foreign Office's correspondence with Mallet. The latter put it forward without hesitation although he favoured only financial pressure and deprecated anything in the nature of threats, "unless we are prepared to go far". * He thought that the occupation of Budeagatch could be effective but might commit Britain "more

1. Mallet to Grey, 14.1.14. Pte. ibid., no. 204. Same to same, 7.1.14. no. 10.

2. Minute by Crowe, 21.1., in: Mallet to Grey, 7.1.14. no. 10. de Bunsen to Grey 12.1.14. no. 14. conf. ibid. no. 202. Minute by Crowe, 23.1. FO/371/2112

3. Same to same, 13.1.14. no. 15. Minutes, 21.1. Same to same, 14.1.14. no. 18. Minute by Russell, 19.1. Grey to Mallet, 26.1.14. no. 52. ibid. no. 213

* Mallet's italics.

than British interests warrant.^{1.} Mallet thus found himself expressing a far more critical view than he had at first. He warned the Foreign Office that the Ottoman Ministers were "reckless and desperate" and even indulged in the Embassy's former familiar habit of blaming the Salonica Jews for the Porte's extreme policy of boycotting Greek shops.^{2.}

But the real failure, so far as Britain was concerned, was that Germany was unprepared to enforce any decision upon the Porte which was unfavourable to her or endangered her interests in the Ottoman Empire. Crowe more than anyone in the Foreign Office was bitter over Germany's "cynical policy".^{3.} Matters deteriorated further when Said Halim expressed "great surprise" that Britain had again taken a hostile attitude to the Porte, who had only been saved by the Triple Alliance. He spoke of the "sinister change" in Britain's policy towards the Porte and reproached the French and Russian Ambassadors in even stronger language. The Foreign Office now unhesitatingly suggested "plain speaking" to both the Triple Alliance and the Porte. It was now believed that the Triple Alliance had "coached" the Porte to adopt such an anti-Entente attitude.^{4.} The Porte believed that Britain had in mind a naval demonstration against them. Britain denied this, but the Grand Vizier saw it as another indication of Britain's coldness, previously manifested by the refusal of assistance.^{5.}

Mallet did not fail to report to the Foreign Office about the desperate financial situation, which according to Crawford and in particular Graves

1. Mallet to Grey, 24.1.14, tel.no.54, conf. Minute by Vansittart, 26.1. ibid. no.329. Same to same, 20.1.14. no.31. Grey to Mallet, 29.1.14. no.57 ibid. no.219. Mallet to Grey, 26.1.14, tel.no.62. Minutes, 27.1.ibid., no.212. (Minutes by Vansittart and Clerk, FO/371/2112). Same to same, 28.1.14. Pte. ibid., no.218.

2. Same to same, 28.1.14. Pte.op.cit.

3. Goschen to Grey, 31.1.14. tel.no.14. ibid. no.222. (Minutes FO/371/2112). Same to same, 31.1.14, no.44. Minutes, 3.2.ibid. no.223.

4. Mallet to Grey, 2.2.14. tel.no.78. Minutes 3.2. ibid. no.226. Nicolson to Goschen, 2.2.14. Pte.NP.372.

5. Same to same, 3.2.14, no.77. Minutes, 17.2. Grey to Goschen, 3.2.14. tel. no.41, ibid. no.229.

was "never worse from an economical point of view in Abdul Hamid's time . . . the present situation is even more serious in one respect namely that the people have learnt to expect more from their new rulers". This critical view of the Porte which Mallet shared too compelled the British Ambassador to adopt a more realistic view of Britain's position in the Ottoman Empire:

I think [he wrote to Grey] that we should maintain our position here by every possible means because, if Turkey remains independent, we should have a voice in her councils and, if she goes to pieces, a greater claim to be heard.

Nevertheless, Mallet's view of Ottoman politics was still governed by his unchanged views of the Ottoman leadership -

I am still of opinion that the present rulers are the best who are to be obtained and that Talaat and Djemal have merits which are not common amongst politicians here. 1.

In the Foreign Office the Islands question produced a real change. They thought about the Ottoman Empire now more and more in terms of the existing Alliances. Vansittart warned against the "shady temporizing" policy of the Triple Alliance which refused to use force against the Porte, and would soon say to the Ottomans: "Go ahead and try to get the islands back. We're your friends. What we said means nothing. We shan't move". But while Vansittart saw the Italians behind the Porte, Crowe naturally saw the Germans at the "bottom of the intrigue". He had no doubt that the question had been discussed between the German officers and the Porte and he expected the former to command the Ottoman forces in the war with Greece.²

The Triple Alliance had other means of persuading the British Government to give up any thought of coercive action. It was San Giuliano, the Italian Minister for Foreign Affairs, who tried this in his conversation with the British Ambassador. He maintained that the Moslems in India were joining the Congress party as a result of the unfriendly policy showed by Britain to the Porte on the question of the Islands. Rodd, the British

1. Mallet to Grey, 4.2.14. Pte. GP.80.

2. Mallet to Grey, 4.2.14, no.70. Minute by Vansittart, 10.2. de Bunsen to Grey, 4.2.14, tel.no. 19. Minutes, 5.2.

Ambassador, rejected this interpretation and advised the Foreign Office to come to an agreement with the Triple Alliance as to their forthcoming claim for concessions from the Porte rather than let them obtain these concessions against Britain's goodwill. He was sure that Italy had not yet decided which Alliance to join. But in the Foreign Office Crowe had decided already that

. . . We are dealing with people who are incapable of straightforwardness. We should be careful not to play into their hands. Every friendly act or concession to them on our part will be turned into a further weapon of offence against us. We ought in regard to Italy to stand strictly on the principle 'do ut des', and do nothing without proper return. 1.

But the British Government could not ignore the problem of the Moslems in India. Hardinge sincerely hoped that the Porte and Greece would come to an agreement since: "The one thing that I dread in this country is another outbreak of war in which Turkey should be involved - especially at the present moment when the Mahomedan community in India is gradually quieting down and beginning to realise that they have been making fools of themselves". Hardinge claimed that he prevented the Moslems from taking up the Islands question. 2.

Grey made it clear that the Islands question had brought with it again another anti-Ottoman change in Britain's policy:

It seems madness for the Turks [he wrote to Mallet on 9 February] in their present financial situation, to boycott and suppress Greek traders in Turkey; and a chauvinist policy will bring Turkey down again . . . Pan Islamic, anti-Greek, military and naval spirit is a luxury in which Turkey cannot afford to indulge. But it is rare that individuals learn by experience in public affairs. The individuals now in power in Turkey are the same as brought her to a catastrophe by a chauvinist policy and they will continue to do after their kind. When a country has learnt by experience, it

1. Rodd to Grey, 30.1.14. no.42. Very conf. *ibid.*, no.221. Minute by Crowe 10.2. FO/371/2113

2. Hardinge to Nicolson, 5.2.14. Pte. NP. 372.

changes her rulers who have brought it to trouble. There is, however, nothing for us to do but to wait upon events

* * * 1.

If another clarification of Britain's attitude towards the Young Turks was necessary it was indeed given by the Foreign Office's reaction to Crawford's urgent appeal to avoid a financial crash. He suggested remedies, an immediate consolidated loan and the increase of the Customs duties were brushed aside, as Parker put it:

I think financial pressure is all to the good as it will make the Turks less inclined to an adventurous foreign policy.

Crowe too rejected the appeal on the ground that the Porte was at the same time spending several millions on warships for a future war. In any case the British Government could always claim that she was not in a position to influence the London Market. 2.

Mallet faced difficulties too. He was not content with Jemal's assurances that the Porte's intentions were purely peaceful and mentioned the Ottoman adventures in Albania, the purchase of battleships, threats in the press and incidents in Paris connected with Cherif Pasha, the liberal Ententist opponent of the CUP, as evidence of distrust in the Porte. Mallet was still impressed by Jemal's honesty, who had promised that he would resign if the Porte decided to go to war. But generally speaking was not so sure as before as to the Young Turks' promises and admitted that he might be wrong in his evaluations. Mallet confirmed the Foreign Office's impression that the Ottomans had been hurt by Britain's "harsh" attitude towards them since she had sacrificed their interests for those of Greece. Nevertheless, Mallet maintained friendly relations with the Ottoman leaders as far as this was possible, and had the feeling that the fact that there was no "personal malice" against him had some importance. 3.

1. Grey to Mallet, 9.2.14. Pte. ibid, no.240.

2. Crawford to Tyrrell. 5.2.14. Minutes, 10-11.2. FO/371/2114/6089. Mallet to Grey, 6.1.14. tel.no.10. Minutes. Grey to Mallet, 7.1.14. tel.no.9

3. Mallet to Grey, 10.2.14. tel.no.95, ibid, no.241. Same to same, 10.2.14. Pte.ibid, no.247. Same to same, 11.2.14. tel.no.97. Minute by Clerk, 12.2. ibid, no.248. Same to same, 7.2.14. tel.no.87. ibid no.234.

Mallet now admitted that there had been deterioration in Britain's relations with the Porte. He still continued to believe in preaching to the Young Turks's leaders. Thus he told Talaat that the Ottoman Empire needs "at least" ten years' peace in order to "recuperate and reorganise their administration:

The Government [he told Talaat] would never be secure unless the population were contented, and were assured of justice and protection . . . and devote themselves to developing the economic resources of their country, and to putting their finances in order.

He could not however resist making an exception of Jemal, although Talaat and Said Halim had also promised to devote themselves to the regeneration of the Ottoman Empire. Nicolson was intensely suspicious as to the importance of their "smooth words". Nevertheless one week later he was prepared to accept Talaat's assurance that they would not go to war since Enver, who up till now caused much anxiety to the Foreign Office, was "most anxious" to have "some time" to reorganise the Ottoman army thoroughly. ^{1.}

On the whole Mallet continued to retain his initial belief that the existing Ottoman Government was "the best" that one could have and reported to London on a "strong" tendency for peace and reform. Another assurance given by Talaat on 17 February seemed particularly convincing to Mallet because of the presence of Crawford, whom Talaat liked. Mallet could not resist telling Nicolson and Grey time and again how impressed he was by both Jemal and Talaat. "Ability", "character" and "honesty" were used by him quite frequently to persuade his chiefs in the Foreign Office that the Young Turks' leaders were the promising statesmen who could save the Ottoman Empire. His few criticisms were a new element in his reports overrating the CUP's leaders:

. . . all of these people [he wrote to Nicolson] require guidance otherwise they are apt to lose their heads and

1. Same to same, 7.2.14, no. 88. Minutes, 17.2. Mallet to Nicolson, 17.2.14. Pte. NP. 372. Nicolson to Goschen, 24.2.14. Pte. NP. 372. Mallet to Grey, 17.2.14. tel. no. 110. Minutes, 18.2. Same to same, 18.2.14. no. 104. conf.

do foolish things which they regret afterwards
[referring to the arrest of the "Neue Freie Presse"
correspondent] . . .

. . . The present Ministers [he wrote the next day to Grey] are the best we can have and I believe that they are really intent on reforms and reorganisation and that we ought to encourage them when they do well. They are like children and very appreciative of sympathy . . . Any help which you could give them would be enormously valued and the islands soon forgotten. . .

It seems that Mallet was not a very good judge of the Ottoman political scene. This is particularly surprising in view of the fact that he himself had witnessed from the perspective of London, the CUP's utter failure in their attempt to govern and reform the Ottoman Empire. What is even more surprising was his entire failure to understand why Germany enjoyed such a predominant position in the Ottoman capital; or why Russia failed to enjoy a similar position:

. . . It is in my belief [that the German predominance was] largely due to clever handling and flattery on the part of German agents but if the Russians would change their tactics and treat the Turks as M. Gulkevitch, the Russian Chargé d'Affaires treats them, with sympathy, they would soon acquire as much influence as Germany and our position would be much easier . . . 1.

An Ambassador who had served as the Head of the Eastern Department from the beginning of the Young Turk Revolution and yet who had failed to see the enormous influence the Germans acquired in the Ottoman army and through it in the CUP leading circles, and who believed that good relations could be gained by sympathy alone, could not be successful for very long. Mallet overrated the importance of the Ambassador's role with regard to himself, Giers and Bompard, and underrated the long-term interests and policy of Powers like Germany and Russia in the Ottoman Empire.

Mallet, however, was not concerned with the long-term conflicts between the Powers and the Porte, he thought that sympathy and money and a

1. Mallet to Nicolson, 17.2.14. Pte.NP.372. Mallet to Grey, 18.2.14. Pte. GP.80. A week later he claimed that the Germans acquired influence because they were 'consistent'. Mallet to Nicolson, 24.2.14. Pte.ibid.

less irritating attitude on Russia's part could do "a great deal" provided the Entente worked together for Ottoman integrity and improvement of the administration. He very strongly urged the Foreign Office to persuade the French Government to fix a date for the first instalment of the planned loan earlier than the one formerly agreed for July. ^{1.}

Whatever Mallet's views Nicolson remained convinced that he was doing well:

We hear on all sides of the admirable position which you have secured at Constantinople. I must say that the vigour and determination which you have shown since you have been there is most gratifying to all who take an interest in Turkish matters . . . 2.

But Mallet had clearly changed his tone towards the Young Turks since his arrival. As the Islands question had previously taught him one lesson, so now the financial "ruin" the Ottoman state was facing taught him another. He found himself in a critical position since he felt it necessary to advise them to make further reductions in the military budget. He was not prepared to accept as easily as before the Ottoman claim that a large army was vital to their existence. He told them that a small army would be enough to defend them from the Balkan States, besides which the present army was simply not large enough to fight Russia. He advised them to take the smaller risk and not to move "to certain ruin financially". He added

. . . the Ministers are inexperienced and very like schoolboys who are often much the better for a little sympathy and commendation than for perpetual criticism. I think that it is possible to a certain extent to guide them in the right path, though this would seem heretical to some people . . .

He was basically convinced that if the Foreign Office would follow his advice, the situation would change entirely -

1. Mallet to Nicolson, 24.2.14. Pte. op.cit.

2. Nicolson to Mallet, 2.3.14. Pte. NP. 372.

As it is our policy to maintain the integrity of the Turkish Asiatic dominions [he wrote to Grey on 10 March] and if we want to prevent the Turks from joining . . . the Triple Alliance, it will not be enough to sit still. The Turks are friendly disposed and they will respond to friendly overtures from us. We can do much by adopting a sympathetic attitude and by avoiding harsh and provocative criticism in which the Times and English Press indulges. If it were possible for you to induce British Financiers or capitalists to take a share in the big loan . . . supposing the French desired it, an immense effect would be produced here and if we could help in a compromise between Greece and Turkey it would advance our interests incalculably. I venture to think that it is worth making this effort and that we now have a position which we had 6 years ago. 1.

But Grey was unable to fulfil Mallet's wishes. He could not influence British financiers to invest in the Ottoman Empire, especially after

Cassel's failure. On the other hand Grey claimed that his attitude towards the Porte was not unfriendly. He resisted Sazonov's proposal to guarantee Greece against Ottoman attack, though he admitted that he had adopted this policy because he could not get a guarantee by the Concert. He maintained moreover that he could not bring about any compromise between Greece and the Porte because this could be done only by putting pressure on Greece. Grey nevertheless agreed to make a somewhat pro-Ottoman statement on 18 March in the Commons but admitted that it was a "somewhat sloppy" speech. 2.

He emphasised the importance of having the "good will" of the Porte in introducing reform, and in the Aegean Islands question where he was at pains to explain that "there is really nothing at which Mahomedan feeling ought to take offence because of the part we have played in the settlement which has taken place". Mallet, who thought that Grey's speech was "very helpful" and "much appreciated", 3 still tried to induce Grey to sound Rothschild on taking up bonds of the new loan and thus participating

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1. Mallet to Grey, 10.3.14. Pte. GP.80. (Partly in BD. ibid. no. 257).
Mallet to Grey, 11.3.14. Pte. ibid. Same to same, 2.3.14. tel. no. 151.
Mallet to Nicolson, 10.3.14. Pte. NP. 373.
 2. Grey to Mallet, 18.3.14. Pte. GP. 80. (Partly in BD. ibid., no.262).
Mallet to Grey, 10.3.14. tel.no. 152. Grey to Mallet, 10.3.14. no.126.
Hansard. LIX 2191-2195.
 3. Mallet to Grey, 24.3.14. no.198. Same to same, 27.3.14. no.206.

in the "outstanding" bills of the two Dreadnoughts, "Sultan Osman" and "Rechadieh", which Armstrong were in the process of constructing. This was an essential part, so Mallet was convinced, of any attempt to preserve the integrity of the Ottoman Empire, which he felt should be the "main object" of Britain's policy, even if it might entail "temporary" sacrifices. Mallet therefore felt that he should propose the following to Grey:

The most obvious way of helping at present is by giving our moral support to the Turkish Government which is on the whole justifiable in the present circumstances, by avoiding all action which might weaken their authority, all small causes of irritation and all suspicion that our ends are entirely selfish and regardless of Turkey's interests . . . 1.

How could Britain fulfil Mallet's wishes when the struggle for spheres of influence was mounting? Mallet could resolve even this. He suggested that the "more we obtain concessions in each others so-called spheres the easier it will be to avert a division of Turkey". His practical suggestions were to apply for oil concessions in Anatolia, and for Britain to object to any irrigation arrangement with the Germans in Mesopotamia unless the latter agreed to Britain's participation in the Konia irrigation. 2.

The Islands question was not solved and dragged on until the beginning of the European War. The Foreign Office was reassured by British diplomats throughout this period that the Porte would exploit the first opportunity to recapture the Islands once they obtained the Dreadnoughts from Britain due for completion in October. The relations between Greece and the Porte deteriorated further as a result of the alleged ill-treatment of their Greek compatriots on the mainland of Asia

1. Mallet to Grey, 23.3.14. Pte. GP. 80

2. Mallet to Nicolson, 25.3.14. Pte. NP. 373.

Minor. The Porte claimed for its part that Greece had intensified its anti-Ottoman propaganda and had thus made war inevitable. The British Naval Attaché confirmed that such an atmosphere existed at Athens and that the Greek navy, without its Government's approval, might sink the Ottoman Dreadnoughts on their arrival. The expulsion of Greeks from Thrace was another cause for friction. As late as June however Mallet was more optimistic and reassured the Foreign Office that Jemal, now Minister of Marine, did not desire war, at least not before September. ^{1.} On 1 July Mallet reported that Talaat was ready to give way in the Islands question but everything still depended upon his colleagues. Mallet considered this progress as his achievement as he had always preached in this direction. Grey as usual was pleased and hailed Mallet for continuing to do "excellently well". ^{2.}

Mallet's policy was well known to the Foreign Office, approved throughout the period by the Foreign Office. The approval given by Nicolson to Goschen at the end of March was rather typical:

. . . Mallet is doing very well indeed at Constantinople and is rather optimistic in regard to the new Turkish Government, for whom he is anxious to enlist as much support as possible. I hope he is not in error and that they are really worthy of the encomiums which are showered upon them. I have always my doubts, but of course the men on the spot are in a far better position to judge than we are . . . ^{3.}

He frequently repeated that the Young Turks Ministers were "all interesting men, very hard working, patriotic, quite different from the former lot and greatly superior, I should think". Neither Nicolson nor Grey, whom Mallet quite successfully converted to his views, questioned Mallet's overrating of the CUP leaders, who had already proved their incompetence to rule the country.

1. Mallet to Grey, 17.5.14. Pte. GP.80. Same to same, 3.6.14. Pte. ibid.
Mallet to Grey, 17.6.14. Pte. ibid., same to same, 20.6.14. Pte. ibid.
de Bunsen to Nicolson, 22.6.14. Pte. ibid., no. 374. Nicolson to Bax-Ironside, 27.4.14. Pte. NP. 373.

2. Mallet to Grey, 1.7.14. Pte. ibid., Grey to Mallet, 11.6.14. Pte. ibid.

3. Nicolson to Goschen, 30.3.14. Pte. NP.373.

With the growing European tension Mallet was at pains to prove to the Foreign Office that the Ottoman Empire should not be seen as a factor in the Powers' game, since this might disturb his policy for the British Government to work for the integrity of the Ottoman Empire. Hence his attempt to obtain financial help for the Porte which was threatened more by bankruptcy "than anything else", and his opinion that the German Military Mission would be politically harmless. ^{1.} But Mallet had a more radical idea about the kind of policy Britain should pursue with regard to the Porte:

Subject to the general condition of maintaining our entente with France and Russia, I think that our right policy here is not to lean too much to either group of Powers but to maintain our freedom of action and to make such agreements as may seem advantageous with whatever country so long as they are not directed against the independence and integrity of this country the maintenance of which should be our main object . . .

Was such an idea possible? Mallet himself in dealing with the question of cooperation with Germany in Near Eastern affairs admitted that this could be done only up to a certain point in order to keep the Entente with Russia and France. Nothing was further from the Foreign Office's mind than Mallet's idea of weakening the Entente. On the contrary, they felt that it should be developed into a regular Alliance:

I am quite sure [Nicolson wrote to Mallet] that this [developing the Entente into a regular Alliance] would be a proper and logical policy, but I feel fully convinced that it will never be carried out as no Government here would venture to propose it owing to the ingrained dislike of the British public to what they term "foreign entanglements". At the same time, I am quite convinced that if the Triple Entente could be converted into another Triple Alliance, the peace of Europe would be assured for a generation or two, and we could then come to some definite and satisfactory arrangement with Russia in all matters connected with the Near, Middle and Far East. Ententes are all very well for a certain time, but they are most unsatisfactory transactions as they have none of the benefits of an Alliance and are always liable to break down when there is the slightest friction or difference of opinion . . . The maintenance of our understanding with Russia [he wrote a few weeks later to Townley] is of the

1. Mallet to Nicolson, 25.3.14. Pte. NP. 373

very greatest importance to us both in Europe and in regard to India and our position generally in the Mid and Far East . . . She can hit us if she becomes unfriendly . . . The understanding with Russia is in reality of far more importance to us than it is to her, and I am continually haunted by the fear that something may occur which may seriously impair that understanding . . . 1.

The question of the progress of the Ottoman navy was another aspect which exemplified the difficulty of following Mallet's policy of an independent attitude towards the Porte. Russia very carefully watched the improvements in the Ottoman navy under British guidance. Mallet maintained that the Russians might raise the question of the passage of the Straits and advised a slowing down. ² The future growth of the Ottoman navy in May and September with the Dreadnoughts expected to be completed, was regarded by the Foreign Office as "ominous" for Greece, but another opinion in the Foreign Office felt that the Greek torpedo-boats and submarines could neutralise the Ottoman Dreadnoughts. It was, however, concluded that with "people like Djavid, Talaat and Enver in the Cabinet, a negligible Sultan and a weak Grand Vizier, any military adventure is to be expected." ³ Mallet himself told Jemal that the Porte was making a mistake in ordering a third Dreadnought before they knew if the first two were an asset or not. He also emphasised the financial strain which was still present, even if the money came from voluntary contributions as it came from the pockets of the people who were already "heavily" overtaxed, on which Crowe commented: Patriotism at other people's expense. ⁴

By May, the Russian Government notified the Foreign Office of its apprehensions on the growth of the Ottoman navy. As Russell indicated

1. Mallet to Nicolson, 5.4.14. Pte. NP. 373. Nicolson to Mallet, 2.3.14. Pte. NP.372. Nicolson to Townley, 7.4.14. Pte. NP. 373.

2. Mallet to Grey, 5.5.14. Pte.GP.80. Mallet to Nicolson, 1.6.14. Pte.NP.374.

3. Buchanan to Grey, 2.1.14. tel.no.2. Minute by Clerk, 3.1. Mallet to Grey 4.1.14. tel.no.7. conf. Minutes by Vansittart and Clerk, 5.1. Mallet to Grey, 31.12.13. no. 1052. Minutes, 6.1.

4. Mallet to Grey, 2.5.14. no.295. Mallet to Grey, 14.1.14. no.22. Minute by Russell, 19.1. Same to same, 16.1.14, no. 26. Minute by Crowe, 21.1.

the Russians might find it difficult to believe that Britain was "powerless" to deal with the matter since she could not order Limpus "to go slow or put obstacles in the way of his work". Britain could not moreover, forbid the Porte to buy ships from British firms. Crowe admitted that it was a "most embarrassing" question to raise and Nicolson suggested Russia should be reassured that the Ottoman navy was "in no way" intended to be hostile to Russia though he admitted prophetically that "It is dangerous to answer for other peoples' intentions for the future." But Nicolson, following Mallet, also felt that the "underlying motive" in the Russian note was to prepare Britain for the raising of the Straits question in view of the fact that her first Black Sea Dreadnoughts would not be ready before 1916, while the Porte could buy them all over the world. Her intention was, therefore, to allow her Baltic navy to go through the Straits. Generally he did not take the matter as seriously as Crowe. Still, Britain had to reassure Russia that she need not view the situation with apprehension. The best way to do that was by claiming that Britain believed that it was part of the reform and integrity policy and any departure from it, like the withdrawal of the Naval Mission, would be "sincerely" lamented by the British Government.

Britain did not fail to use another argument: had the British Government refused the Ottoman application the Porte would have quite certainly applied to Germany. To entrust both Ottoman army and navy in German hands would not be in the "real" interests of either Russia or Britain. As to the forthcoming danger of the Ottoman navy to Greece, the British Government shared Russia's anxiety but also trusted that before the Dreadnoughts' arrival the Porte would realise the "imprudence" of another war. If the danger of war became acute Britain would enter into an exchange of views with the Russian Government. The question was even more difficult to solve since Britain also maintained a Naval Mission with the Greek navy.¹

1. Memo by Benckendorff, 21.5.14. Minutes, 24-27.5. FO/371/2114/23121. Grey to Buchanan, 10.6.14. no. 216. Grey's memo 9.6. (written by Crowe) Memo by de Etter, 1.6.14. Minute by Crowe, 3.6. ibid., 25026.

The Russian apprehensions were confirmed by the British Naval Attache who visited the various naval Ottoman schools and approved the "considerable" progress made by the Ottoman navy during the first half of 1914, now going on the right direction towards efficiency.¹ The British Government, however, had already decided in January that the continuation of Limpus' Mission was of overriding importance. They arrived at this decision even though Mallet warned of the dangers of a strong Ottoman navy not only for Russia or Greece but also for Britain. He maintained that there was an element of contradiction in the fact that Britain was assisting in building an efficient Ottoman navy since this fleet was "not likely to help British interests and policy in the Mediterranean." He envisaged the possibility that Ottoman Dreadnoughts might in future visit Alexandria, the Persian Gulf or Bombay, which might be "embarrassing politically" for Britain. But Mallet's conclusion, supported by Limpus, was that Britain must not refuse the Ottoman application soon to be expected, for the continuation of the British Mission. Otherwise, the Porte would regard the British refusal as an indication that "HMG no longer took so much interest in the preservation of the integrity and independence of Turkey." If the argument of reform and integrity was not strong enough a better one was always the threat that such a refusal might throw the Porte even more into the arms of the Triple Alliance. Limpus added that the influence of the Triple Alliance, especially that of Germany, was "preponderant" in the Ottoman Empire partly because many Ottoman officers who occupied prominent positions had been educated in Germany. Mallet, who did not refute it, felt that "importance is, however still attached to the good opinion of G. Britain and greater confidence is felt in British advice and disinterestedness than in that of other foreigners". He realised however, that Britain's inferior position resulted from the bad relations between Russia and the Porte.

The Foreign Office did not differ from Mallet's conclusion that the

1. Captain Boyle, Naval Attache, to Mallet, 23.5.14, no. 3. in: Mallet to Grey 31.5.14. No. 390.

Naval Mission should be continued, although, as Vansittart put it, this might bring "trouble" by the appearance of the Ottoman navy in Egypt, India or the Persian Gulf - or "possibly find it used against us in a conflict in the Mediterranean." The danger of the Germans stepping in seemed to the Foreign Office a very real one. It was therefore believed that the British Naval Mission might have a restraining influence on the Porte and perhaps counterbalance the German influence in the army. Nicolson thought that the best way would be if Limpus' contract could be renewed, but he was less alarmed by the progress of the Ottoman navy since he "very much" doubted that it would ever become "an important or efficient factor".^{1.}

The matter was further complicated in February since Limpus felt that his work was being thwarted by the Ottoman Under-Secretary of State for the Navy who had German sympathies. Limpus had the presentation of an ultimatum to the Porte in mind, but agreed that the British Government had first to be asked for its opinion since this might result in his own retirement, and his replacement by a German. Vansittart maintained that it was not so much Limpus' possible retirement which mattered, as the fact that Britain was at the time "very unpopular" in the Porte and therefore it was inopportune to endanger the position of the British Mission on the issue of the Under-Secretary. They should better first settle the question of Limpus' mission or of his successor.^{2.}

Jemal had, however, asked Limpus to stay for another year at least. Mallet supported Limpus' prolongation of office because it would be advantageous to British interests as he was persona grata to the Porte and to Jemal. Limpus himself preferred to return to the British Navy

1. Mallet to Grey, 21.1.14. no.35. Minutes, 27-28.1.

2. Mallet to Grey, 3.2.14. tel.no.81. Minutes, 4.2.

but would stay, so Mallet wrote if the British Government expressed its desire that he should do so. ^{1.} Since it was quite clear to the Foreign Office that he was worried about the possible injury to his future prospects of promotion, it reassured him on this score because his retention in the Ottoman navy was "clearly", as Crowe said, "desirable for political reasons". The Admiralty also agreed to Limpus' request to retain six officers for another six months, because after the "drastic" changes which Jemal had made it would be a "disaster" if their withdrawal occurred at this moment. ^{2.}

The Russian objection did not really seem great to the Foreign Office because of the improvement in Russian-Ottoman relations which were marked by the formation in March of a combined Committee for the better understanding between the two countries due to M.Goulkevitch, the Counsellor in the Russian Embassy. Mallet felt that his finest hour was now possibly near since a Russo-Ottoman rapprochement would remove an important cause of distrust between Britain and the Porte and enable cooperation between Russia and Britain for the fulfilment of their "common desire to maintain the integrity and independence of the Ottoman dominions in Asia".

Nicolson noted that the formation of such a Committee was "interesting" but hoped that members of the British Embassy would not ask to join the Anglo-Ottoman Association which was also established in the beginning of 1914. ^{3.} The Foreign Office was much less enthusiastic than Mallet in view

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1. Same to same, 26.2.14, tel.no.126. Foreign Office to Admiralty, 6.3.14. FO/371/2130/8647/14. Mallet to Grey, 8.3.14. tel.no.148. Same to same, 10.3.14, no.159. (Enclosure: Said Halim to Mallet, 5.3.14.)
 2. Mallet to Grey, 12.3.14, tel. no.163. Minutes. Admiralty to Foreign Office, 25.3.14. ibid./13437. Mallet to Grey, 19.4.14. tel.no.249. Admiralty to Foreign Office, 21.4.14. ibid./17638.
 3. The Anglo-Ottoman Association to the Foreign Office, 24.1.14 Minute by Russell, 26.1. FO/371/2127/3721. Same to same, 28.1.14. Minute by Crowe, 31.1. FO/371/2126/4327. The Foreign Office refused to allow Lieut.-Col. Hawker of the Ottoman Gendarmerie to become the Vice-President of the Association. The President was Lord Mowbray and Stourton: Vice-President F.H.O'Donnell, a former nationalist M.P., and included: Lemington, T. Barclay, H.Cox, A.Herbert, W.Guinness and E.N.Bennet. All these names, as Crowe commented, did not inspire confidence since they were associated with "political fads or extremes". On the Association's objects see: same to same, 20.2.14, ibid./8171.

of the deep-seated Russian Turcophobia: "Anglo-Russian solicitude for the integrity of Turkey sounds ominous".¹

The question of a Russian-Ottoman rapprochement came up again in May when Talaat paid a "complimentary" visit to the Czar in Livadia. Sazonov had carried away "the best" impression of his conversation with the Young Turk Minister. Talaat expressed his desire for friendship with Russia because of the Ottoman vulnerability to any Russian blow. Sazonov reciprocated that wish since the liquidation of the Balkan question removed an important cause of friction between them. He stated that Russia would rely on Ottoman friendship if the latter would not allow any Power to control the Straits or to enjoy a privileged position in her dominions. Talaat gave him "satisfactory assurances" on all points. Buchanan, however, was sceptical, but the Foreign Office, inclined to be rather optimistic: "This is very satisfactory" commented Crowe.² Talaat was further reassured by the Czar himself on Sazonov's promises, and was decorated with the Order of Alexander Nevski. Giers told Mallet that political questions had not been discussed in detail in Livadia. Mallet confirmed to Giers that he was glad of the rapprochement, since Ottoman Ministers had told him frequently that the Anglo-Russian Entente was a "menace" to their independence. Giers, however, was sceptical since he thought that it was difficult to count on the Porte for long. But Mallet was not deterred or discouraged. His conclusion was curious and unpractical:

The present situation, though it requires delicate handling, seems to be rather favourable than the reverse to British interests, which will be best served by maintaining the general lines of cooperation with the Triple Entente without leaning too ostentatiously towards either group of Powers.

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1. Mallet to Grey, 18.3.14. no.185. Minutes, 25-6.3. Same to same, 19.3.14. no.190. Minutes, 31.3. FO/371/2132.
 2. Buchanan to Grey, 17.5.14, tel.no.114. Minute by Crowe, 18.5. Buchanan to Nicolson, 14.5.14, Pte. NP. 374.

The Foreign Office, without referring to the peculiar suggestion of some kind of neutrality, thought that the rapprochement could be advantageously used in explaining to the Russians that there was no menace to Russia in Britain reorganising the Ottoman fleet. ¹.

f. Britain and Italy's Ambitions

On the eve of Mallet's arrival in Constantinople Italy joined the Powers' struggle for spheres of influence in the Ottoman Empire. Rather than the Islands, including Rhodes, which she had occupied before, Italy was now attracted to the Anatolian mainland.

Already in September 1913 Marling had warned the Foreign Office against the recent "particularly" intimate relations between the Italians and the Porte. Negotiations had been going on since February for a railway concession from Adalia to Selefké, and rumours were spread in the capital that Italy's aim was to create a "sphere of special economic interests" in Southern Asia Minor from opposite Rhodes up to the western boundary of the Adana vilayet. Since the Adana district itself had been referred to by Wangenheim as a German "sphere", Marling believed that this would lead Italy to identify her interests with those of Germany who did not oppose Italy's peaceful penetration. ².

Britain regarded the new Italian activity as an "infringement" of the convention which had been signed between the Porte and the Smyrna-Aidin Railway Co. on 6 October 1906. Moreover, it caused a "painful impression" in Britain because of the negotiations with Hakki for the extension of the Smyrna-Aidin Railway and a prolongation of the British concession. Said Halim's denial of any concession to Italy was accepted in the Foreign Office with suspicion. Vansittart, therefore, suggested that a warning should be given at Rome. Little belief was placed in the

1. Mallet to Grey, 20.5.14, no.357. Minute by Crowe, 26.5, confirmed by Nicolson and Grey.

2. Marling to Grey, 16.9.13, no.788, conf. Nicolson to Goschen, 4.11.13. Pte. NP. 371.

promise made by the Italian Minister for Foreign Affairs that no encroachments would be made upon any concessions in the region. But he did not deny Italy's ambitions and asked Britain to change her attitude with regard to Rhodes and Stampalia. Italy, he added, like Germany came late to the field of "spheres of influence" in countries bordering the Mediterranean.

The British, however, whilst always opposed to the "spheres of influence" policy, now subscribed as in the earlier case of Mesopotamia, to precisely this kind of policy. Clerk was aware that Italy wished to combine the questions of Tripoli and the Islands in order to press for a change in Britain's attitude to her project in Adalia. Both Crowe and Grey thought that she should be resisted in her ambitions. Grey revealed his new attitude to "spheres of influence" policy: "We need not oppose anything in Asia Minor that does not conflict with the rights of the Smyrna-Aidin Railway but we must oppose Italian projects in the Islands". Indeed, the Admiralty~~already~~ confirmed that she would object to any Power holding any islands in the Mediterranean east of Malta.¹

Hakki also promised Parker that the Porte was "in no way" bound to Italy for the grant of a railway or a commercial port and promised that the rights of the Smyrna-Aidin Railway would be upheld. Parker, who was long-acquainted with this sort of question in Mesopotamia, knew very well the difference between economic and political interests: "sometimes," he told Hakki, "a commercial port was the thin end of the wedge for territorial aggrandisement". Hakki replied that the Ottoman Empire was not China.²

Imperiali, the Italian Ambassador in London, talking to Grey, did not deny that Italy had ambitions in Asia Minor. He said that Italy's desire

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1. Harling to Grey, 21.9.13, tel.no.475. Minute, 22.9. Grey to Rodd, 22.9.13, tel.no. 271. Dering to Grey, 15.10.13, tel.no. 177. Minute by Crowe, 16.10. Dering to Grey, 15.10.13, tel.no.178. Minutes, 16.10. ibid., no.151. Grey to Bertie, 22.10.13, no.629, ibid., no.152.
 2. Mallet to Grey, 29.10.13, tel.no. 528. Minute, 30.10. Grey to Mallet, 28.11.13, no.434.

was to see the integrity of the Ottoman Empire preserved, but since France, Germany and Russia were pursuing "economic" expansion, Italy wished for the same. Grey revealed a great deal when he said that the Smyrna-Aidin railway was the only British railway in the Ottoman Empire, in fact its "ewe lamb", and Britain therefore wanted to protect her rights there. He claimed that Britain had no other railway in mind unless the Baghdad Railway were continued beyond Basra to the Persian Gulf.¹ Parker was perhaps the most vociferous opponent of Italy's ambitions. He told Hakki, who said that Italy was following the Russian example, that he could "hardly appreciate the attitude of His Highness [Hakki], who, with the example of Italian action in Tripoli before his eyes, seemed to be intent on treating his country like a plum cake, and to be taking the lead in cutting it into slices, primarily for the benefit of a Power which had hardly had the time to digest what she had so recently swallowed".

Speaking to Rodd, San Guiliano did not hesitate to include Britain amongst the Powers which had secured an economic "sphere" for themselves, in their particular case in the area bordering the Persian Gulf. He promised that British consent to an Italian sphere would make it easier to solve the Islands question. But Britain had adopted a tough line. Vansittart indicated that Britain was "personally and strategically" more concerned over the evacuation of the Islands than she had been in the Liman affair. His conclusion was typical: "If we were going to have trouble with the Triple Alliance it would be better for us to have it over a matter where really vital British interests were at stake". The Foreign Office as a whole opposed the Italian policy very strongly. Crowe noted that Italy's ambitions were not only at the expense of

1. Grey to Dering, 4.11.13, no.269. Hardinge to Nicolson, 19.11.13. Pte. NP.371.

2. Minute by Parker, 2.12.13. Approved by Crowe and Grey, 3.12. FO/371/1844.

Britain's established interests but also "of a kind incompatible with the policy of maintaining the integrity of Asiatic Turkey". Nicolson accused Germany and Italy of creating a new phrase "jone [sic! zones] de travail", which he regarded as "a euphemism for sphere of influence".^{1.} The Italians for their part rightly accused the British of departing from their principle of Ottoman integrity. Garroni, the Italian representative at Constantinople, regarded the cession of Chios and Mitylene as a permanent menace to the Ottoman Empire.^{2.}

The Foreign Office commended the Porte for refusing to be "bought" by Italy in order to get her Islands back. Nicolson named the Italian claim for compensation as a "rapacious" one.^{3.} The Foreign Office was much pleased when Jemal told Mallet in confidence about his determination to resist Italy's ambitions in Asia Minor. Norman hoped that Jemal would have enough influence to prevail in the Porte, and Crowe accepted the view of the Ottoman Ambassador at Rome that the Italian schemes "smack too much of Tripoli" to be accepted by the Porte. He concluded

Quite apart from our own interests, in the shape of the British railway, we may find it politic from the point of view of our already rather difficult relations with Turkey not to support or connive at these Italian designs for the creation of a sphere of influence at Adalia.^{4.}

Meanwhile Germany promised her support to Italy for compensation in the question of the Islands, which Clerk regarded as "ominous" and Crowe as cause for "deep concern". The main reason for this anxiety was, as Vansittart admitted, strategic, as the danger of permanent Italian presence

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1. Rodd to Grey, 6.6.12, no.377, conf. Same to same, 6.12.13, tel.no.218 ibid., no.167. (Minutes, 8.12.FO/371/1844). Grey to Rodd, 11.12.13. tel. no. 366. ibid., no.168.
 2. Mallet to Grey, 16.12.13, no.1011, ibid., no.172. (Minute by Crowe, 24.12. FO/371/1804). Rodd to Grey, 11.12.13, tel.no. 220.
 3. Same to same, 13.12.13, tel.no.222. Minutes, 15.12. ibid., no.170. Same to same, 14.12.13, no.348. Minute by Norman, 29.12. Nicolson to Townley, 15.12.13, Pte., op.cit.
 4. Mallet to Grey, 29.12.13, no.643, very conf. Minutes, 30.12. Same to same, 29.12.13, no. 1048, conf. ibid., no.185.

in the Dodecanese was regarded as "more important to us than the question whether Turkey or Greece gets the Islands further north".^{1.}

Such a strong reason naturally made it impossible to accept any Italian claim for compensation for their investments in the islands. Vansittart could not but regard it as "nonsense" and Nicolson commented that the Italians were "very shifty". Grey, however, found the interests of the Smyrna-Aidin Railway Co. important enough to oppose the Italian demand for concession in Adalia. Grey explained to the Italians that the secret Anglo-Italian agreement of 1902 involved Britain's consent to an occupation of Tripoli, but not that of the Islands which Italy had promised to evacuate. Grey now suggested that Britain would not oppose the Adalia concession if the Italians satisfied the Aidin-Smyrna Co. The Italians were now also more specific than before in asking for a concession for harbour works in Adalia. They stated that they could not take the "pretensions" of the Smyrna-Aidin Railway Co. into account and hinted to Nicolson that the Foreign Office should press the Company to give way. Nicolson claimed that the British Company had a privileged-right over the port of Adalia and that nothing could be done about it.^{2.} The matter became further complicated for Britain after Said Halim told Mallet that it would be necessary to give the concession to the Italians. Mallet's impression was that the Porte's idea was to hasten the evacuation of the Islands.^{3.}

At this stage Crowe took the most serious view of the Italian ambitions, when he saw behind it a Triple Alliance's intrigue, already suspected by France: "It would of course be in accord with their [the

1. Goschen to Grey, 2.1.14, tel.no. 2. Minutes. Rodd to Grey, 4.1.14, tel. no. 2. *ibid.*, no. 191. (Minute by Vansittart. FO/371/2112). de Bunsen to Grey, 12.1.14, no. 14. conf.

2. Bertie to Grey, 8.1.14. no. 15, conf. Minutes, 9.1. Grey to Bertie, 6.1.14, no. 11. *ibid.*, no. 194. Grey to Rodd, 7.1.14. no. 6, *ibid.*, no. 197. Rodd to Grey, 11.1.14, no. 18, *ibid.*, no. 201. Grey to Rodd, 15.1.14. no. 15.

3. Mallet to Grey, 15.1.14. tel.no. 29.

Triple Alliance's] views that the desired 'compensation' to Italy for carrying out her pledges and treaty obligations should be made at the expense of British interests in Turkey as far as possible". Nicolson took a more balanced view, although he too had doubts about Italy's sincerity: ". . . we cannot forget [he wrote to Mallet] that we were equally emphatic in regard to the evacuation of Egypt, and we are still there and likely to remain there for some generations, unless we are turned out by force." He now saw the possibility of an agreement between the Smyrna-Aidin Railway Co. and M. Nogara the Italian representative. ^{1.}

Crowe went further in his suspicion of Italian ambitions. When the Italians mentioned the exchange of Chios and Mitylene against some of the Dodecanese as a possible solution, Crowe had "no doubt" that the Italians wanted to include Chios and Mitylene in their proposed "sphere of interest" in the Ottoman Empire. ^{2.} Grey too now took a stronger attitude than before. He told Imperiali that during the last year or two Italy had encroached upon British interests more than any other European Power. She had raised Moslem feeling in Egypt by the annexation of Tripoli, put new conditions for the evacuation of the Islands and claimed concessions injurious to British interests in the Smyrna-Aidin Railway and now in the event of a break-up of Abyssinia, she demanded Lake Tzana which Britain considered as "essential" for the waters of the Nile. ^{3.}

As for relations with the Porte, Britain although she opposed Italy's ambitions, was in an uneasy position. The reason was that the Porte was extremely concerned about Mitylene and Chios, where Britain adopted a pro-Greek attitude, and comparatively very little about Italy's

1. Nicolson to Mallet, 19.1.14. Pte.NP.372. Rodd to Grey, 11.1.14, no.18 Minutes, 21.1. FO/371/2112. Bertie to Grey, 9.9.13. tel.no.126, Minutes 10.9. ibid., no.147. Nicolson to Mallet, 10.11.13. Pte.NP.372.

2. Mallet to Grey, 28.1.14, tel.no.65, conf. Minute, 28.1.

3. Grey to Rodd, 28.1.14, no.33, conf. ibid., no.217.

ambitions in the Dodecanese or Adalia. The Porte was more appreciative of Italy's readiness to return Mitylene and Chios to them than impressed by Britain's opposition to Italy's ambitions. Said Halim told Mallet that Italy, Germany and Austria had "fortunately" saved the situation for the Porte by refusing to participate in Britain's "hostile initiative" on the Islands. ^{1.}

The Foreign Office, though they discovered that Italy was successful in "egging on" the Ottomans, were not ready to change their line, unless the Italians came to an agreement with the Sayrna-Aidin Co. ^{2.} They changed their attitude only after realising that the Italians would not give in unless they obtained the Adalia concession. Another reason was, as Talaat explained, the Porte's readiness to yield to the Italian demand, on the basis of give and take, and gain Chios and Mitylene in exchange for Adalia. ^{3.} Since there was also a good prospect of solving the conflict of interests between Italy and the Sayrna-Aidin Co., even Crowe was ready to compromise. Grey also realised that the "best solution" would be for the British Company to obtain the concession of the railway to Adalia and for the Italians to get the concession for the port of Adalia. ^{4.} Mallet however recommended Jamal's suggestion for an Anglo-Italian combination on the ground that this would prevent the Makri-Mouglia line from becoming Italy's "exclusive sphere of influence". He warned that the Marmarice Bay, which was next to the much-coveted line, was more valuable as a naval base than Stampalia or any Greek Island. He maintained that the Italians were looking forward to the partition of

1. Mallet to Grey, 2.2.14, tel.no.78, ibid., no.226

2. de Bunsen to Grey, 4.2.14, tel.no.19. Minute by Vansittart, 5.2. Nicolson to Mallet, 2.2.14. Pte. NP. 372.

3. Mallet to Grey, 7.2.14, tel.no. 87, ibid., no.234.

4. Mallet to Grey, 1.2.14, tel.no. 72. Minutes 2-3.2. Minutes by Crowe, Nicolson and Grey, 31.1.14. FO/371/2117/4762. Grey to Mallet, 16.2.14. no.80.

the Ottoman Empire "in the not far distant future", and therefore regarded Adalia and Marmarice as more important than the Islands. A few days later he went as far as to suggest that it would be better for Italy to stay in the Islands than to acquire the "far better" ports of Marmarice, Karaagatch and Makri. Mallet's view was regarded by Crowe as one of unfounded "alarm". As long as the negotiations between the Italians and the Smyrna-Aidin Co. were proceeding on sound lines, the Foreign Office was not worried.¹ Mallet alone feared that the Italians might create a strategically dangerous "sphere of influence" in the Adalia-Marmarice area. Crowe took a more balanced view when he maintained:

I confess I doubt whether there need be any such danger. Smyrna is not a British nor Mersina a German naval port, although a British railway starts from Smyrna, and a German from Mersina.

If Turkey falls to pieces the Italians may wish to obtain possession of the ports where the Italian-built railways debouch. But except on the general Turkish collapse, there ought to be no difficulty in preventing such ports assuming the character of Italian naval ports.²

The excitement aroused by the Italian ambitions in Asia Minor died down towards May, when the Smyrna-Aidin Railway Co. safeguarded its rights by an agreement which was finally signed with the Porte on 29 July. It was preceded by an agreement between the Company and the Italian syndicate. But the Porte was not in a hurry to give the concession to Italy. Neither was Grey more willing than before to help the Italians obtain this concession. He told Imperiali as late as 23 July: We had been pressing Turkey for concessions that we ourselves wished to have, and we could not well press Turkey for concessions to other people". Britain, however, secured its rights in the Smyrna-Aidin Railway, where she even

1. Mallet to Grey, 10.2.14, tel. no. 94. BD.X.ii. no. 199. Same to same, 21.2.14, tel. no. 118. Mallet to Grey, 28.2.14, tel. no. 129. Same to same, 4.3.14, tel. no. 139. Minute, 5.3.

2. Mallet to Grey, 4.3.14, no. 145. Minute by Crowe, 11.3; confirmed by Grey. Same to same, 10.3.14. Pte., op. cit.

obtained a concession from the Porte which admitted no Ottoman directors on the Company's Board. The demand was based on the fact that the railway was purely British and not guaranteed by the Porte. ^{1.}

g. The "Arab question" and Zionism

Mallet was preoccupied not only with the question how to obtain the Foreign Office's confidence in the Young Turks' regime and with the question of the threatened integrity of the Ottoman Empire, but also with what he called the "Arab question" and to a lesser degree with Zionism.

Only a few days after his arrival Mallet took up the "Arab question", The pretext was the appointment of Bekir Samy Bey as the new Vali for Beirut, as a result of the recent agreement between the Young Turks and the Young Arabs. ^{2.} The Embassy, contrary to the Foreign Office, was inclined to believe that the "Arab question will henceforth be the important question in the Ottoman Empire, and Beirut is, so to speak, the capital of the Arab movement". The information of the Embassy went even further: "Many Young Turks now hold the view that the Ottoman Empire should be formed into a 'Turco-Arabia' on the lines of Austria-Hungary, with the Sultan-Caliph as the Crown link". The Foreign Office's attitude, expressed by Oliphant, was typical of Britain's policy through all this period. They were concerned only with the stabilization of the Empire, though they admitted that if the Beirut Vilayet had 24 Valis in the last five years, something must be wrong with that province. Nevertheless, Bekir Samy Bey's appointment filled the Foreign Office with

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1. Convention initialled between the Smyrna-Aidin Co., and the Ottoman Government, 7.5.14. Minute by Crowe, 1.5. FO/371/2119/20441. Final signature, 29.7. ibid.,/34983. Agreement between Smyrna-Aidin Co. and the Italian Syndicate, 19.5.14. ibid./22739. Mallet to Grey, 2.7.14, tel.no. 404. Minute by Parker. Grey to Rodd, 23.7.14, no.211. Rodd to Grey, 18.7.14, no.270. Minute by Crowe, 27.7. Beaumont to Grey, 31.7.14, no.546.
 2. This included: a) the revenues of the local Evkafs to be utilised by the local Moslem councils, b) local military service, c) Arabic to be the medium of instruction in schools in areas where Arabic-speaking people were the majority, d) all officials in the Arab provinces must be acquainted with Arabic. Marling to Grey, 25.9.13, no.818. FO/371/1845

the hope that his good record augured a success. ^{1.}

The Foreign Office's attitude was again manifested in the Asis Ali al-Misri affair, which came up in February 1914. The matter came to the attention of Kitchener, through Asis Ali's brother-in-law, the Governor of Cairo, who asked Mallet to make friendly and unofficial enquiries to the Porte over his arrest. Mallet maintained, however, that Asis Ali was one of the "leading spirits" of "young Arabs" who expressed their dissatisfaction with the CUP Government. Mallet was careful not to attribute too much importance to this "group", but his information went as far as attributing to this group an intention to free the region from the Persian Gulf up to Mosul from Ottoman rule, in connection with local notables including the Sheikh of Kuwait. One of their aims was to "compel" British intervention. As a supporter of Ottoman integrity Mallet could be expected to reject such plans without more ado. He accordingly informed this group that Britain would not support what she thought was a policy of adventure which, he added, could only cause damage to British economic interests in Mesopotamia. In the Foreign Office the Mesopotamian "conspiracy" was regarded as a "delicate" matter and if sympathy would be shown to them it might put the British Government "in a false position" both as regards the Porte and the "conspirators". The "conspiracy" as such was hardly taken seriously at the Foreign Office where it was regarded as "probably all very abortive". It was agreed not to show any local interest in the "conspiracy", and in the matter of Asis Ali and to make further interventions only on humanitarian grounds. ^{2.}

1. Mallet to Grey, 29.10.13. no.904. Minute 11.11.FO/371/1848. (Also Clerk's remark on Fitzmaurice's participation in writing this letter: "pure Fitzmaurice", he commented on the term "religionistic binding" used in Mallet's letter).

2. Mallet to Grey, 21.2.14, tel.no.117, very conf. BD.X.11.p.833. Same to same, 24.2.14, no.117. Minute by Russell, 3.3. ibid., pp.833/4. Grey to Mallet, 16.3.14. no.135, ibid. Merchants of Cairo to Grey, 8.3.14. Minute by Russell, 10.3. Mallet to Grey, 9.3.14, tel.no.153. conf., ibid. See also: Appendix I.

No more encouragement was given to Abdullah, son of the Grand Sherif of Mecca and a deputy of the Ottoman Chamber, who asked for Britain's intervention at the Porte in the event of his father's deposition, on the grounds that he had always been helpful to the Moslem pilgrims from India. He added that the tribes of the Hedjaz would fight the Porte in such a case, and hoped that Britain would not allow Ottoman reinforcements to go through. Kitchener to whom this "very secret" message was made, was no more likely than Mallet to support any such separatist movement. He told Abdullah that it would be "improbable" for the British Government to send the Grand Sherif any message. No doubt Kitchener was right in his refusal to support the Grand Sherif since an "amicable" settlement was soon achieved between the Vali and the Grand Sherif, though it had fallen through for a while. ^{1.}

The fourth case in which the Foreign Office manifested its opposition to any anti-Ottoman, and practically to any anti-CUP movement, was the attitude adopted towards Ibn Saud's rising power. ^{2.} Early in March the Porte complained that Britain had entered into "direct" relations with Ibn Saud. They referred to the conversations held by mid-December between Ibn Saud and the British political agents in Bahrein and Koweit. Hakki maintained that these conversations had created a "very" painful impression at Constantinople, since they were contrary to the Convention agreed upon on 29 July 1913. Parker, in explaining the British attitude to Hakki, claimed that there had been "great" unrest in the Trucial Coast and in nearby Muscat and Britain was anxious not to treat Ibn Saud coldly, otherwise he might retaliate against the British protected tribes.

1. Kitchener to Grey, 6.2.14. no.22. Secret, *ibid.*, p.827. Same to same, 14.2.14, tel.no.7, conf. *ibid.* Same to same, 21.3.14. Minute by Russell, 21.3. *ibid.*, p.830. Same to same, 23.3.14, tel.no.176. Minute by Russell. Same to same, 2.4.14, tel.no.213. E.Kedourie, England and the Middle East, 1914-21 (London. 1956), pp.47-50.

2. Busch, op.cit. pp.340-5.

Another reason was the danger that British merchants' interests could be damaged by being excluded from El-Katif. Hakki reminded Parker that the Ottoman Government would soon have to justify to the Ottoman Parliament the concession which had been made to Britain with regard to El Katr, the Aden delimitation and the Persian frontier. Hesitation in recognising Nejd as an Ottoman sphere by Britain would make the other agreements "most unpopular". Parker advised treating this question carefully in order to avoid any difficulties on the Porte's part. In the Foreign Office it was immediately realised that the "erroneous impression" which had been created at the Porte must be dispelled. The India Office was informed that the conversations which had been held with Ibn Saud under the auspices of the Government of India had created the impression that Britain's policy was "inconsistent with that of upholding the integrity of the Ottoman Empire".^{1.}

Mallet, however, took these questions more seriously than the Foreign Office. He took up the rumour of a possible congress at Koweit of "Arab chiefs", including the Grand Sherif of Mecca, Ibn Saud of Nejd, Ibn Rashid of Jebel Shammar, Ajeymi Sheikh of Muntefik and the Seyyid Talib of Basra. Although it was soon established that the congress was not to be held, Mallet thought that it was still "significant" in view of the "dissatisfaction" which prevailed amongst "Ottoman Arabs generally". He did not exclude the possibility of these chiefs on the fringe of the Ottoman Empire coming together in order "to enforce nationalist aspirations". Nevertheless, he admitted that so far there was no cohesion amongst these chiefs, who were at each other's throats. But though Mallet admitted that the Arabs had no leader he still regarded what he called "the Arab

1. India Office to Foreign Office, 9.2.14. Enclosure 4. Memo by Major A.P. Trevor, Political Agent, Bahrein and Captain W. Shakespear, Political Agent, Koweit. FO/371/2123/6117. Foreign Office to India Office, 7.3.14. Enclosure, Minute by Parker and Grey, 7-8.3. ibid./10244. Foreign Office's Memo concerning H.M.G.'s attitude to Ibn Saud, 9.3.14, made by A. Hirtzel, P. Cox and A. Parker to Hakki, ibid./10569.

movement" as the "most serious feature of the present situation". They have learned, he told Grey, from the Balkan wars that the "only road to success is by uniting against the Turks". This and probably his information that some of the "Arab leaders" were "intelligent and educated men" convinced him that these leaders if combined in either constitutional agitation or autonomy or a separatist movement, could "undoubtedly cause much trouble." Mallet, however, thought in accord with the official policy of his Government, that it would be better not to demonstrate any interest in the "Arab question" to the Ottoman leaders, in view of the Arab sympathy towards the British Government, especially since the Arabs intended to force British intervention by attacking British subjects, as had occurred at Basra. But he knew that the Arabs could be successful only by defeating the Ottoman army, which might produce the loss of Caliphate, the partition of the Ottoman Empire and unknown repercussions in India. He knew very well, moreover, that the Porte was aware of these questions and would temporise with the Grand Sherif at least until they divided the Arabs and felt that they were strong enough to rule them with success. Mallet's advice to the Foreign Office was to be cautious and wait and watch events.

But in the Foreign Office there was neither interest nor any serious attention given to Mallet's description of what he thought was an "Arab movement". Parker's minute approved by Crowe and Nicolson, exemplified this aspect of the Foreign Office's attitude. He admitted that the situation was "very delicate" but he referred only to Ibn Saud. If there was anything which worried the Foreign Office it was the possible impact of Ibn Saud's growing power on British interests in the area bordering the Persian Gulf. Parker emphasised that he always strongly opposed the contacts which had been made between British political Agents in the Gulf and Ibn Saud.¹ Nevertheless, the Foreign Office found it necessary to

1. Mallet to Grey, 18.3.14, no.193. Minute by Parker, 31.3. ibid., pp. 827/8. Same to same, 23.3.14. Pto. GP.80.

point out to Mallet, although leaving it to his discretion whether to mention to the Porte or not, that they hoped that the Porte did not launch any military operations against Ibn Saud without first allowing Britain to work out a settlement. Britain was not looking for political advantage but was anxious lest such a military operation would create "widespread unrest" throughout Eastern Arabia. ^{1.}

The Foreign Office also, opposed the warning to Ibn Saud which had been suggested by the India Office on 16 March. The Foreign Office reminded the India Office of the Viceroy's letter of 13. September 1913 which now became relevant -

. . . the existence in Asia of a strong Turkish power, friendly and reformed, will be a safeguard against interference with India from the West . . . it would be a serious prospect for India if partition of Turkey eventuated. Our responsibilities would be increased thereby . . . It is our strong opinion therefore, that every effort should be made to avoid action likely to lead to the partition, either now or in the future, of Turkey's Asiatic possessions, and that HMG should pursue consistently the policy of maintaining the Turkish Empire while reforming and strengthening it . . .

Grey's attitude was to avoid any British intervention in view of the hope that the negotiations between the Porte and Ibn Saud, through the Sheikh of Koweit, would bring about a successful settlement. Britain was ready to offer her mediation if these negotiations failed, but at the same time an "emphatic" statement should be made that Britain adhered "strictly" to the Convention of 29 July 1913 which confirmed Nejd as an integral part of the Ottoman Empire. ^{2.}

Mallet, however, allowed himself some liberty to make enquiries with regard to the "Arab question" when he spoke to Talaat. But he limited his enquiries only to the disposition of Seyyid Talib. On the other hand he reported that the Porte was suspicious of Abdullah's visit to Cairo and

1. Grey to Mallet, 26.3.14. tel.no.164 (written by Parker)

2. Foreign Office to India Office, 1.4.14. FO/371/2123/12320. Grey to Mallet, 1.4.14. tel. no. 175.

the contacts which had been made with Ibn Saud. Aziz Ali's case by now a serious matter because of his condemnation to death, was not regarded by Mallet as a part of the "Arab question". It was consistently pursued as a humanitarian case by Mallet, the Foreign Office and Kitchener until his release. ^{1.}

The India Office meanwhile was still trying to influence the Foreign Office to control the Porte - Ibn Saud negotiations. They claimed that the integrity of the Ottoman Empire would suffer if Britain left the negotiators alone. For if, as was likely, the negotiations took the form of coercion it "almost certainly" might result in the emergence of the "Arab confederacy" to which Mallet had referred. They therefore suggested sending a ship to the waters of Bahrein in the event of the Porte trying to violate them in an action against Ibn Saud. ^{2.} The Foreign Office rejected this kind of policy for they always opposed the bellicose attitude of the India Office with regard to the Porte. Such an intervention on Britain's part, in the existing suspicious state of mind at the Porte, would have "a very bad effect" on Anglo-Ottoman relations. The Foreign Office was ready to go, as Mallet informed Talaat, only as far as mediation and impressing upon the Porte the need to avoid any resort to force. ^{3.}

Mallet's interpretation of British policy towards Ibn Saud was wider than that of London. He understood by it not only free access and proper treatment of British subjects in Nejd and the prevention of any disturbance of the Pax Britannica in the Gulf, but also "to prevent, or at least

1. Mallet to Grey, 25.3.14, no.205. very conf. Same to same, 27.3.14, tel. no.191, *ibid.*, pp.835/6. Ahmed Ali and others to Grey, 16.4.14, *ibid.*, pp. 837/8. This letter was ignored in the Foreign Office and does not warrant publication as has been done by the editors of BD. Mallet to Grey, 18.4.14. tel.no.246. *ibid.* Minutes, FO/371/2131. Kitchener to Grey, 4.4.14, no.58. conf. *ibid.*, pp. 830/1.

2. India Office to Foreign Office, 4.4.14. FO/371/2123/15023.

3. Foreign Office to India Office, 6.4.14. (Written by Clerk and Crowe), *ibid.* Mallet to Grey, 4.5.14, tel.no.276.

postpone, anything which might lead to a general Arab outbreak, and so endanger the integrity of the Turkish dominions in Asia". Mallet concluded that according to these aims and the Convention of 29 July 1913 Britain should allow the Porte to control Ibn Saud, otherwise "the chances of an upheaval might be increased rather than diminished if an influential and centrally placed chief like Ibn Saud were to consolidate his power and extend it permanently to the seaboard". Mallet suggested that Britain should leave the Porte and Ibn Saud to come to a settlement without British intervention as long as there was a chance of achieving such a settlement, and only intervene if the Porte resorted to force. He was sure that the Porte would resort to diplomatic means only, as Talaat had promised.

Mallet also claimed that though his treatment of Aziz Ali was "purely" humanitarian it was liable to "misconstruction by indiscreet violence and partisanship of the Times." * This, he maintained, served as another indication for the Porte that Britain kept interfering in "Arab politics". He warned the Foreign Office that this kind of suspicion, however unjustified, might create an "atmosphere of distrust" between Britain and the Porte which should be avoided.

The Foreign Office entirely agreed with Mallet who so well expressed the Foreign Office view contrary to the attitude of the Government of India. Grey ordered sending instructions to the local British representatives establishing the fact that Britain was loyal to the agreement of 29 July 1913 which recognised Ibn Saud as being under Ottoman rule, and that no communication should be entered into with him: "He must be dealt with as a Turkish official or not at all . . ." ¹.

But Mallet foresaw great opportunities for Britain in the future

1. Mallet to Grey, 12.5.14, no.335. Minutes by Parker, Crowe and Grey 18-19.5 FO/371/2124. Foreign Office to India Office 4.6.14. ibid. 23753

* The Times based its partisanship in the Aziz Ali case on the fear that it might "deeply stir Egyptian feelings." Leader: from 5 March (p.7). The paper's leaders grew more and more anti-CUP in character: 27.3. p.9. On 9 April it was hinted that the injustice made to Aziz Ali would seriously affect Anglo-Ottoman relations. Also leaders on 15 April (p.9) and on 4 May (p.7.).

since there was no doubt in his mind that the Porte would never be able to regain influence in northern and eastern Arabia, where its influence had "almost entirely" disappeared. As a result of this forthcoming disintegration of the Ottoman rule in that part of its Empire, Mallet felt that Britain's relations with Ibn Saud would become "natural and inevitable" without any detriment to British interests in the Ottoman Empire. ^{1.} But the Foreign Office now even refused to entertain an idea of a British officer to be employed in the Yemen since it might add "fresh fuel" to Ottoman suspicion of British influence with the Arabs which had now become acute because of Ibn Saud. ^{2.}

By June, however, negotiations between the Porte and Ibn Saud had come to their successful end. Ibn Saud accepted the position of a Vali and commandant of the whole of Nejd directly dependent on Constantinople, and acknowledged that he was an Ottoman subject. The Porte was not to accept any tribute from him, but it was agreed that Ottoman garrisons would be stationed in Ojar and Katif and although he was allowed to create his own militia, he was to have no right to conclude treaties with foreign states. ^{3.}

Early in July Talaat told Mallet in confidence that he intended to recall the Vali of Basra and to appoint Seyyid Talib instead. The Foreign Office, however, had learned meanwhile from Shakespear that Talib was, as Crowe put it, "a worthless and corrupt intriguer of a base sort". Fortunately, a few days later, Talaat abandoned his plan to appoint Talib as a Vali and said that he would endeavour to find an impartial Vali who would keep both Ajoymi and Talib in order. In the Foreign Office there was a certain relief, for, wrote Crowe, Talib's appointment would have

1. Same to same, 15.5.14, no.346. Minutes, 22.5.

2. Memo by Lieut.-Col.H.Jacob, A Plea for a New Policy in the Yemen. Minute by Crowe, 30.5. FO/371/2134/22608.

3. Mallet to Grey, 23.6.14, tel.no.376, Minutes. Same to same, 29.6.14. tel.no.391. Same to same, 11.7.14, tel.no.306.

caused "endless trouble".^{1.} The principle of Ottoman integrity had by now undergone another change: Britain was ready to accept local independent chiefs, of the Ibn Saud type, so long as they remained loyal to Ottoman rule.

Britain displayed very little interest in Zionism, since Fitzmaurice's prediction of May 1913 that the Jews would obtain Palestine and the land of Midian.^{2.} But in December the question came up again as a result of the Porte's abolition of the "red passport" which non-Ottoman Jews had been obliged to take out on arrival to Palestine and which gave them permission to stay only three months. Mallet regarded this as an important concession since the Zionists obtained what they had long striven for - i.e. unrestricted immigration to Palestine. He also attributed a certain importance to the revival of the Hebrew language by the Zionists, whose aspiration was that it should be recognised by the Porte as soon as Jews formed the majority in Jerusalem and Palestine, "so that it may one day be possible to have a Jewish Governor of Jerusalem". In the Foreign Office some interest was shown in the possibility of Jewish immigration, but Russell thought Mallet was mistaking Hebrew, which he regarded as a dead language, for Yiddish. Crowe had more to say about it: "Modern Jews are not likely to take to talking Hebrew, whether at Jerusalem or elsewhere, however much it may be taught in schools. The attempt to galvanise dead language into spoken ones is a fad of modern nationalism!"^{3.}

Later in April and May 1914 when the Consul-General at Jerusalem reported on the "growing resentment" amongst Arabs against Zionism and what he called the "threatening economic preponderance" of the Jewish

1. Note communicated by the India Office, 27.6.14, conf. Shakespear to Hirtzel, minute by Clerk, 29.6. ibid./28966. Mallet to Grey, 2.7.14. tel.no.399, conf. Same to same, 2.7.14, tel.no. 398. Minute, same to same, 9.7.14, tel.no.422. Minute, 10.7.

2. Fitzmaurice to Tyrrell, 8.5.13. Pte. GP.80. He admitted to following here an idea put forward by H.H.Johnston, "The Final Solution of the Eastern Question", "Nineteenth Century and After" (March 1913), p.544.

3. Mallet to Grey, 21.12.13, no.1023. Minutes 29-30.12.

element neither Mallet nor the Foreign Office paid any serious attention to it. Such was also their reaction to the Vice-Consul's report from Jaffa that while natives were "streaming out" of the country "the Zionists coming in." 1.

Early in July the Foreign Office again manifested its negative attitude to Zionism. Sokolov again applied to the Foreign Office in an attempt to enlist its support for the Zionist colonization in Syria and Palestine. The Foreign Office regarded him as a nuisance. Russell suggested that Clerk should see him while Clerk preferred that Russell should, since he "strongly" refused to be the "victim" for what he regarded as a waste of time. Crowe, however, suggested a compromise by which Sokolov would submit a report in writing which would receive "careful consideration". 2.

On 26th June the "Inflexible", the flagship of Admiral Sir Berkeley Milne C.-in-C. Mediterranean, arrived at Constantinople. Jemal, according to Limpus, was "immensely" impressed by what he had seen of the "Inflexible" and was especially struck by her superiority "in every way" to the "Goeben" which, so Jemal said, "bore all the marks of the Parvenu in comparison with the real article". During the banquet given at Yildiz Kiosk in honour of the British Admiral, and in the presence of all the members of the Ottoman Cabinet, news came of the assassination at Sarajevo. Mallet, always a great believer in ceremonial punctilio, had to cancel his dinner party, ball and reception, but was still satisfied that a good impression

1. Hough (Jaffa), 29.4.14, no.33. McGregor (Jerusalem), 30.4.14, no.31. in: Mallet to Grey, 12.5.14, no.329 (signed by Russell and Crowe, 19.5.). See also: N.Mandel, "Turks, Arabs and Jewish Immigration into Palestine, 1882-1914". St Antony's Papers No.17 (Oxford, 1965), pp.77/108. Y.Ro'i, "The Zionist Attitude to the Arabs 1908-1914", Middle Eastern Studies (1968), pp.198-242.

2. Sokolov to Grey, 7.7.14. Minutes 9-10.7. Crowe to Sokolov, 14.7.14. FO/371/2136/30841.

had been made. 1.

The Foreign Office was immovable in its attitude towards the Porte. Thus when Talaat, the Minister for the Interior, made on 19 July, one day after secret discussions for an alliance with Germany had started, a promising speech in the Ottoman Chamber in which he claimed that relations with the Powers were as "cordial as in the past" and that the present Government would endeavour to achieve "peace and tranquillity", the Foreign Office's reaction was: "It sounds well, and there may be some practical good among what is probably mostly 'eyewash'." 2.

By the end of July, when Mallet went to England for a holiday, Anglo-Ottoman relations seemed to be relatively relaxed. The Foreign Office was glad that the agreements with regard to the Gulf and Mesopotamia were signed, and though the conflict with Greece was not yet solved, the Ottoman Empire became less prominent in Britain's foreign policy in the last few weeks before the European War. Nicolson, who at first refused to believe that the assassination at Sarajevo would lead to a war, was on the 28th quite sure that Britain ought to fight on the side of her friends. 3. But as far as the Ottoman Empire was concerned nobody could have imagined that in a few days it would also take sides.

1. Mallet to Grey, 6.7.14, no.497. Mallet to Grey, 1.7.14. Pte.GP.80.

2. Beaumont to Grey, 20.7.14, no.520. Minute by Russell, 28.7.

3. Nicolson to Buchanan, 30.6.14, Pte.NP.374. Same to same, 14.7.14. Pte NP.375. (Partly in BD.X.ii.App.I) Nicolson to de Bunsen, 6.7.14. Pte. ibid., Nicolson to Buchanan, 28.7.14. Pte.BD,ibid., no. 239.

CHAPTER 7

The Last Phase: The Outbreak of War*

Contemporaries inside and outside the Foreign Office did not consider Mallet's pre-July 1914 Embassy at Constantinople as a failure, and neither have historians. Even though he failed to achieve anything substantial he was praised at least by his contemporaries. His failure was not, however, a personal one, since it was London who had decided upon the pro-Greek policy. All his courting and flattery of the Young Turks for the period of nearly nine months (October 1913 - July 1914) was to no effect since he could not persuade the Foreign Office to initiate a more conciliatory policy towards the Porte, independent of the Entente. But the Foreign Office had not chosen him to reverse British policy towards the Turks. All his appeals for such a policy which would have meant keeping the Ottoman Empire neutral, found a deaf ear in the Foreign Office. While always encouraging him to continue in his policy of flattery they were never ready to initiate any new and independent policy towards the Porte.¹

1 Ahmad, "Great Britain's Relations. . ." op. cit., pp. 323/4. Cunningham "The Wrong Horse?. . ." St. Antony's Papers, No. 17 (1965) pp. 56-76. See also Nicolson's and Grey's constant praise quoted in Chapter 6. But see: P.P. Graves, Briton and Turk, passim. Sir E. Pears, Forty Years . . . pp. 344ff. Ryan defended Mallet but could not resist writing: "If he had a fault it was that he was too mercurial, oscillating between the deepest depression and comparative optimism." Ryan, op. cit., pp. 96-7, 108-110.

* A considerable number of the documents relating to this chapter had been published, sometimes in full, but without the minutes in Cd. 7628.

Mallet was instead condemned for his actions after the outbreak of the war (August-October 1914). The reason for this rather severe condemnation by contemporaries (but not in the Foreign Office), and by historians, was his ignorance of the Ottoman-German Treaty which had been signed during his absence from Constantinople on 2 August. One question is whether this justified the accusation that Mallet had misled the British Government into believing that the "moderates" inside the Young Turk Cabinet could be encouraged. Another is whether one could really accept the argument that Kitchener or Stratford Canning would have "for sure" defeated the pro-German faction in the Porte, given, of course, that the Foreign Office would have allowed them to do that.

Whilst on the evidence one may justify criticism of Mallet for his pre-War Embassy in the Ottoman Empire, one cannot just single him out rather than the Foreign Office for criticism relating to the August-October period. For not without reason did Grey and Lord Robert Cecil publicly defend Mallet's Embassy during that period. Again in 1917 Lord Robert Cecil defended him in a confidential comment to the Cabinet after the late Ambassador had been sharply attacked by The Times.¹ The simple and crucial fact was that the Foreign Office doubted whether they could prevent the Porte's entry into the war on Germany's side after the "Goeben" and the "Breslau" entered the Dardanelles on 10 August, at which time Mallet was absent from Constantinople.

¹ Graves, op. cit., passim. Cunningham, op. cit., p. 72. Magnus, op. cit., pp. 230-1. The Times, 24.8.17. Mallet's apologia, 27.8.17, FO/371/3060. See also an adaptation of Mallet's arguments, the apologia of 1917, in F. Cunliffe-Owen, "The Entry of Turkey into the War. The Action of H.M. Embassy," "National Review" (November, 1931) pp. 611/622. Grey, Twenty Five Years, (London 1925) passim. House of Commons Debates, 21 October 1915, 5th Series, vol. LXXIV, cols. 1970-1. H. Nicolson, Lord Carnock (London, 1930) p. 428. For the German Alliance see: Trumpener, Germany and the Ottoman Empire. 1914-1918, (Princeton, 1964), passim. Howard, The Partition of Turkey, passim. Hurswitz, Diplomacy in the Near and Middle East, (Princeton, 1956) ii, no. 1.

Certainly neither Mallet nor the Foreign Office could have adopted the same policy had they discovered the Ottoman-German Treaty in time, as this would have entailed the breaking off of diplomatic relations between the two countries if not the outbreak of hostilities. Whilst the entrance of the "Goeben" and the "Breslau" did not entail that, why then did Britain put so much effort into an attempt to persuade the Porte to send the German crews away? It seems that the Foreign Office was interested in keeping the Porte neutral by any means and as long as possible until this became impossible in late October.

Whoever was blamed afterwards for its failure Mallet's policy was carried out with the full knowledge of the Foreign Office, without any discouragement from them. If there was any failure on Britain's part in preventing the Porte from joining the war on Germany's side it arose from the policy which had preceded July 1914. It was as much the policy of the Foreign Office as of the Embassy at Constantinople.

Talaat's failure to achieve a Russian alliance in May and Jemal's failure to achieve an alliance with France in July 1914, doubtless contributed to the triumph of Enver's pro-German party. But again it is also important to indicate that no such alliance had been proposed by the Porte to Britain since June 1913. Besides little could be expected from Britain in view of her pro-Balkan and Pro-Russian policy. But it is difficult to accept the theory that the "progress of diplomacy" which "played into the hands of Enver", was the overriding influence in bringing the Porte to Germany's side. Both military and diplomatic predominance of Germany and the strength of the pro-German faction, represented mainly by Enver, seem to be the crucial factors in bringing the Porte on Germany's

side.¹

It has already been convincingly demonstrated that the pro-German faction was the leading one in the Ottoman Cabinet. It included not only Enver, Halil and Said Halim, but also Talaat the man who had recently tried to bring about an alliance with Russia. Serious talks for an Ottoman-German alliance started on 18 July. Enver and Said Halim were to make official offers to Wangenheim and Pallavicini respectively on 22 July. Talaat soon won the agreement of Jemal, but was informed of the alliance only on 1 August. Djavid, the Minister of Finance was also informed of the alliance at this late hour. He presented the only real objection to Enver's policy. He "vigorously" maintained that it would be a "fatal mistake" to expect a German victory in the war and warned that the Ottoman Empire would disappear from the map if defeated. Significantly it was Enver who told Djavid that the Treaty with Germany was a fait accompli.

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- 1 Y.T. Kurat, "How Turkey drifted into World War I", Studies in International History, eds. K. Bourne and D.C. Watt (London, 1967), p. 293. Ahmad curiously denies, without any proof from Ottoman sources, the existence of a pro-German faction, claiming that the main body was the pro-Entente faction. Kurat has made clear the prominence of the pro-German faction, op. cit., p. 297. Ahmad, op. cit., p. 324. See also: D.A. Rustow, "Enver Pasha", Encyclopedia of Islam, II, p. 699. Enver told Wangenheim on 22 July: "...A small minority in the Committee . . . wanted an alliance with Russia and France . . ." "The majority of the Committee, headed by the Grand Vizier with Talaat Bey, Halil and himself, did not want to become vassals of Russia and was convinced that the Triple Alliance was stronger than the Entente and would be the victors in a world war. . ." quoted by Albertini, The Origins of the World War of 1914, III, pp. 611/2. Trumpener's claims, that Germany was not predominant at the Porte or even that Enver acted only as a result of "Ottoman self-interest", are not very convincing, op. cit., pp. 16-20.

The Treaty itself was signed on 2 August by Said Halim and Wengenheim. With Ottoman intervention on Germany's side in its war with Russia. Liman's position was further consolidated and Germany promised to help the Porte to preserve its integrity and to help the recovery of lost territories in Europe and the Aegean islands. It was immediately followed by the mobilization of the Ottoman army. The pro-German faction proved its overwhelming power over their opponents both in the army and the Cabinet.¹

When these dramatic events took place Mallet was on leave and the Embassy was in the charge of the newly arrived Henry Beaumont, formerly Counsellor at Athens. It should be added that neither Giers, the Russian Ambassador nor Bompard, the French Ambassador who were both at the time in Constantinople had any idea of what was going on between the Germans and the Ottomans. Whoever was in charge of the British Embassy the first important step was taken in London, where the Admiralty had decided not to deliver the battleships "Sultan Osman" and "Reshadish" just completed to the Ottoman navy. It is claimed that the news about the embargo on these ships had contributed to the final victory of Enver. This is no doubt true for the Porte indeed intended to use them in the struggle between the Entente and their enemies. As a matter of fact, on 1 August Enver and Talaat suggested to Berlin that they transfer the "Sultan Osman" to a German port.²

1 Kurat, pp. 299, 301/2. Trumpener, pp. 16-17.

2 Nicolson's interview with Tewfik, 1.8. Grey to Beaumont 6.8.14, no. 522. Same to same, 3.8.14 tel. no. 333. Trumpener, p. 24. This fact has been overlooked by R.E. James, Churchill - A Study in Failure (London 1970) p. 58 n.1.

The commandeering of the ships came as a "shock" to the Porte. Said Halim, Talaat and Jemal all expressed to the British Charge their annoyance with Britain's decision which they described as an unfriendly act. Grey himself tried to explain to the Porte that it was necessary for Britain to keep the ships for themselves in view of the European situation. He promised that the financial loss to the Porte would receive "all due consideration", and it was a subject for "sincere regret" to Britain. But whatever the damage was to Anglo-Ottoman relations this was little in the face of the Treaty with Germany.¹ But the Young Turks were cool to the last. Jemal, according to Beaumont, acted like a "spoiled child", stating that he would never place another order in Britain and threatened to cancel the docks contract if Britain withdrew the Naval Mission. Beaumont asked the Foreign Office to promise that the requisitioned ships would be delivered to the Porte at the end of the war, provided Britain was not compelled to use them. Beaumont maintained further that Limpus and his staff would be now "doubly" anxious to leave because they were placed in "extremely" difficult position as a result of Jemal's "unreasonable" attitude. But the British Charge was not frightened by the "very bad temper" of Jemal or the other Ministers. The reason was that he believed that as a result of Britain's declaration of war on Germany, made on 4 August, the pro-German ardour, "artificially created and unscrupulously encouraged" by Wangenheim, had already calmed.²

Grey, however, felt that it would be better if the Naval Mission

1 Beaumont to Grey, 3.8.14, tel. no. 476. Same to same, 7.8.14, tel. no. 493. Grey to Beaumont, 4.8.14, tel. no. 337.

2 Beaumont to Grey, 6.8.14, tel. no. 489. Same to same, 7.8.14, tel. no. 493.

remained since a withdrawal might offend the Porte and dispose them more to Germany. He feared moreover that it might be replaced by a German Mission. He turned down therefore Bompard's suggestion to call the Naval Mission on leave in order to avoid its replacement by a German Mission. The final aim of the French Ambassador was to induce the Porte to dismiss the German Military Mission. Grey did not believe that this was possible.¹

The Germans meanwhile inflicted their coup upon the Porte by the arrival of the "Goeben" and "Breslau". This was, as one historian called it, "A Tragedy of Errors" and a "melancholy . . . episode". The roots of the trouble had been caused by the Admiralty's instructions to Admiral Berkeley-Milne, C.-in-C. Mediterranean - an "officer of inferior calibre utterly lacking in vigour and imagination" - to refrain from acting against "superior forces". The Admiralty never contemplated that the "Goeben" might continue to the Dardanelles, but only to the Adriatic or Gibraltar. Milne missed a "golden opportunity" to prevent the German Admiral, Souchon, from slipping out of the Messina Straits. Another "horrible" blunder was committed by the Admiralty on 8 August when Milne was ordered to start hostilities against Austria, which was later discovered to be a false alarm. Thus Milne entered the Aegean only on the morning of the 10th August. On the same day at 8.30 p.m. the "Goeben" and the "Breslau" entered the Dardanelles. At first the Admiralty considered the escape as almost a success, only later was its disastrous effect realised.²

1 Beaumont to Grey, 7.8.14. tel no. 495. Grey to Beaumont 8.8.14, tel. no. 345.

2 A.J. Marder, From the Dreadnought to Scapa Flow, vol. II (1965) pp. 20-41. See also the even greater mistakes committed by Troubridge, Milne's deputy, ibid., pp. 33-7.

In the Foreign Office Clerk suggested linking the question of the Ottoman ships with the "Goeben" affair, and if the Porte would keep strict neutrality in the matter of the "Goeben", Britain should "at once" undertake to pay the cost of both vessels and guarantee their immediate delivery after the war.¹ But it soon became clear that the Porte would not be satisfied just with getting back the full price of their Dreadnoughts. An appeal to the Foreign Office made on 11 August by Caillard, Ottly and Barker who were connected to the Porte by the docks contract, was not only for the payment for the ships and the return of similar ships after the war, but also for a guarantee by the Entente to keep the Porte "absolutely" neutral. The Foreign Office was, however, far away from giving such a guarantee. Clerk, who represented it in the discussion with Caillard, Ottly and Barker commented: "I did not say that while they were talking, the "Goeben" and the "Breslau" were probably off Stambul and an alliance with Germany concluded, but it is clear that if anything in this sense is to be done, it must be done at once." Crowe, however, thought that if the Porte had already decided on war they would not change their mind as a result of Britain's readiness to pay for the seized ships, but, like Clerk, he did not see any objection to making a last effort. Nicolson was the most uncompromising since he felt that it was doubtful if a guarantee for Ottoman integrity, when the Porte were thinking about the extension of their territories, would be even "a temporary bait" for them to remain neutral. He overruled his subordinates in the Foreign Office, saying that he did not like making such an appeal to the Porte.²

1 Armstrong and Whitworth to Foreign Office, 11.8.14. Minute. FO/371/2137/38132.

2 Minute by G.R. Clerk, 11.8.14. Minutes by Crowe and Nicolson, ibid.,/39189.

Meanwhile the Germans and the Young Turks found some way to enable the German ships to remain in the Dardanelles. Halil suggested that the ships be sold to the Porte. But the selling of the ships proved to be only a nominal arrangement, since Souchon and the German crews proved to be unwilling to let the Ottoman crews take over. Initially the Foreign Office believed that the sale was genuine, but this time the Germans and their Young Turk supporters could not conceal the fact that it was only a nominal arrangement. Oliphant called it a "scandal", but the rest of the Foreign Office were rather concerned with Giers' bellicose attitude towards the Porte. Besides the Porte's declaration of neutrality was seen as "very satisfactory" when Tewfik transmitted it to the Foreign Office.¹

When on 15 August Limpus and his staff were suddenly withdrawn from the Ottoman fleet and ordered to continue work at the Ministry of Marine, Beaumont admitted that he was "at a loss" to understand the significance of the move. He was caught between the danger which faced Russia as a probable result of the presence of German technical experts, who would stay even if the crews withdrew, and the "very prevalent" anxiety felt by the Ottomans as to Russia's intentions. He felt that an Anglo-French guarantee of Ottoman integrity could clarify the situation unless the Porte had already been "too deeply compromised by mischievous intrigues". His confusion was so great, because of the absence of exact information, that on the same day he called upon the Foreign Office to make a statement which would promise the return of the requisitioned ships after the war,

¹ Kurat, pp. 303/4. Grey to Beaumont, 13.8.14, no. 524. Tewfik to Grey, 13.8.14. Minute. FO/371/2138/38756. Beaumont to Grey, 13.8.14, tel. no. 536. Minutes, 14.8. by Oliphant, Clerk and Crowe.

combined with a guarantee for Ottoman integrity. This he believed "would finally detach Turkey from the side of Germany and Austria".¹ Surprisingly the continued mobilization convinced him that the activities of Enver and the pro-German faction were a "blunder". Thus we find Beaumont advising the Foreign Office the following: "If more moderate counsels do not prevail it is scarcely rash to predict that the collapse of the Ottoman Empire is coming dangerously near."²

But the British Government devoid as she was of exact information, was not misled by Beaumont. The presence of the "Goeben" and the "Breslau" was too conspicuous a proof for the Government in London. Thus on 15 August Churchill sent a personal and confidential telegram to Enver in which he warned him in a friendly way to keep strict neutrality:

I hope you are not going to make a mistake which will undo all the services you have rendered Turkey and cast away the success of the second Balkan war . . . siding with Germany openly and secretly now must mean the greatest disaster to you, your comrades and your country. The overwhelming superiority at sea possessed by the navies of England, France, Russia and Japan over those of Austria and Germany renders it easy for the four allies to transport troops in almost unlimited numbers from any quarter of the globe and if they were forced into a quarrel by Turkey their blow could be delivered at the heart. On the other hand I know that Sir E. Grey, who has already been approached as to possible terms of peace if Germany and Austria are beaten has stated that if Turkey remains loyal to her neutrality, a solemn agreement to respect the integrity of the Turkish Empire must be a condition of any terms of peace that affect the Near East. The personal regard I have for you, Talaat and Djavid and the admiration with which I have followed your career from the first meeting at Wirzburg alone leads me to speak these words of friendship before it is too late. ³

1 Beaumont to Grey, 15.8.14, tel. no. 545. Same to same, 15.8.14, tel.no.546.

2 Beaumont to Grey, 15.8.14, no. 564. Encl. Col. Cunliffe-Owen; Military Attaché, 13.8.14. no. 28.

3 Churchill to Beaumont, 13.8.14. Pte. tel. GP. 80.

Grey, however, was in complete despair on that day as to the possibility that the Porte would stay neutral. He told Benckendorff as follows:

Turkey's decision will not be influenced by the value of the offers made to her, but by her opinion which side will probably win and which is in a position to make the offers good." 1

Beaumont, however, thought that the best policy would be to restrain Russia and to secure the withdrawal of as many as possible of the German crew. He saw good signs in the Ottoman flag flying on the German ships and the nominal command of an Ottoman officer. But in London it was thought that the scales had already turned against the Entente. On 17 August Grey warned all British vessels in the Black Sea not to attempt the passage of the Straits. All British vessels were warned not to proceed to Ottoman ports and those already there should leave at once.²

Mallet, who on 16 August had returned to Constantinople, felt the situation was not serious enough to warrant such an "extreme" measure. He was allowed to suspend it as the Foreign Office regarded it only as a necessary precaution in view of the "wholesale" detention of British ships.³ But Crowe pushed for even more stringent measures. He suggested the recall of Limpus and his staff at once since if war

1 Quoted by Taylor, The Struggle for Mastery in Europe (Oxford 1954) p. 534.

2 Beaumont to Grey, 16.8.14, tel. no. 547. Grey to Roberts etc., 17.8.14, tel. no. 21. Grey to Beaumont, 17.8.14, tel. no. 382.

3 Mallet to Grey, 17.8.14, tel. no. 555. Grey to Mallet, 18.8.14, tel. no. 391.

started they might be detained. The pretext for his recall could be the removal of Limpus from his command, which had been a breach of his contract. He had no doubt that Admiral Souchon would replace Limpus and felt that this was "inevitable and practically already decided." In addition he recommended cooperation with the Greek navy for the sake of using Greek naval bases and maintaining maritime communications with Egypt.¹

The official policy of the Foreign Office, however, was not to "fasten" any quarrel with the Porte, as long as they remained neutral. As Grey told the Entente Ambassadors on the 15th it would be "very embarrassing" to Britain in India and in Egypt if the Porte turned against the Entente:

If she [the Porte] decided to side with Germany, of course there was no help for it; but we ought not to precipitate this. If the first great battle, which was approaching in Belgium, did not go well for the Germans, it ought not to be difficult to keep Turkey neutral . . . the proper course was to make Turkey feel that, should she remain, and should Germany and Austria be defeated, we would take care that the integrity of Turkish possessions as they now were would be preserved in any terms of peace affecting the Near East; but that, on the other hand, if Turkey sided with Germany and Austria and they were defeated, of course we could not answer for what might be taken from Turkey in Asia Minor. 2

So the British Government decided to work for Ottoman neutrality. Mallet reported that Enver was "very much pleased" with Churchill's message and that if Britain announced that the seizure of the ships was only temporary and their full value and an indemnity would be paid, then public feeling would "immediately" turn in Britain's favour. Mallet was strongly in favour of such an announcement. Churchill, indeed,

1 Minute by Crowe: Situation in Turkey, 16.8.14. ibid.,/40391.

2 Grey to Bertie, 15.8.14. no. 533. (Repeated to Buchanan, 15.8.14, no. 316).

agreed to all Enver's demands, but they could come into force only on the day when the last German officer and man from the "Goeben" and the "Breslau" left Ottoman territory.¹

The British Government's precaution of sending Admiral Troubridge to command the British fleet near the Dardanelles and watch the movements of the "Goeben" and "Breslau", alarmed Mallet, who feared it might help Germany. Grey assured him that the idea was to keep the Admiral and fleet on guard till the complete departure of the German crews as promised by the Porte. No hostile action would be taken if the Porte maintained neutrality.²

By now Mallet had already returned to Constantinople and he immediately started to act most vigorously to maintain the neutrality of the Porte. He saw his task as both to persuade the Porte to keep strict neutrality, and to persuade London that such a course was possible. Thus he expressed his surprise to Said Halim that the Porte was under "entire" German influence and the serious breach of neutrality on the part of the "Goeben" and the "Breslau". He accepted the Grand Vizier's promises that in time he would get rid of the German crews who could not yet be replaced by Ottoman crews until they arrived from London, where they had gone to take home the "Sultan Osman" and "Reshadieh". Said Halim also said that Grey's assurance with regard to the seizure of the Ottoman ships would help him "enormously" in his efforts to keep the country out of the war. Mallet, who a few years later denied that he was taken in by Said Halim, was convinced of

1 Mallet to Grey, 18.8.14, tel. no. 559. Grey to Mallet, 19.8.14, tel. no. 398.

2 Mallet to Grey, 17.8.14, tel. no. 556. Grey to Mallet, 18.8.14, tel. no. 396.

Said Halim's "absolute personal sincerity". He admitted to Grey that the situation was "delicate", but he had "great" hopes if only Britain would stay patient. Both Mallet and Limpus, to whom Enver expressed his delight over Churchill's message were taken in. Mallet's meetings with both Said Halim and Jemal on the day of his arrival convinced him that there had been a "decided" improvement in the situation and that the pro-neutrality elements were gaining strength.¹

In the Foreign Office Oliphant remarked that "Unfortunately the whole Turkish Government is not incorporated in the person of the Grand Vizier." Clerk hoped that Ottoman opinion could be calmed by the right message. Grey thought Churchill's second message would be sufficient.² But on the 19th Mallet surprisingly admitted that in spite of Said Halim's promises the situation was serious. He now thought that the presence of the British fleet at the Dardanelles was a "wise precaution" in view of the possibility of a coup d'état by the military with the "Goeben's" assistance. He regarded the renewed prohibition on British ships passing the Straits as the reassertion of the military party, and the Foreign Office admitted it was "serious".³

Nevertheless, Mallet continued to persuade the Porte to keep strict neutrality. This time through Jemal, who still presented himself as pro-French and pro-British. He assured Mallet that if France and Britain could guarantee his country against Russia, German influence

1 Mallet to Grey, 18.8.14, tel. no. 557. Same to same, 18.8.14, tel. no. 560.

2 Minutes to tel.no. 557, 19.8.

3 Mallet to Grey, 19.8.14, tel. no. 562. Same to same, 19.8.14. tel. no. 564. Minute by Clerk, 20.8.

would immediately collapse. He also asked for a defence treaty with each of the Entente Powers, the abolition of the Capitulations, the immediate delivery of the seized Ottoman ships, renunciation of any interference in internal affairs and the return of West Thrace in the event of Bulgaria joining the enemy camp. He also stated that if the "Goeben" crew would not leave, he would open the Dardanelles to the British fleet. This was his reply to Mallet's accusation that Wangenheim was the "master" in the Ottoman capital. Mallet knew that Jemal's proposals might appear as "terms imposed by a victorious enemy", but he felt that if Britain was serious in keeping the Porte neutral she could attain it by giving them a "real" guarantee against Russia.¹ Sazonov was prepared to give such a guarantee to the Porte in writing jointly with France and Britain, but an alliance with the Porte, as suggested by Enver, was not regarded as serious since the Porte demanded Western Thrace and the Islands. But the Porte also asked for the abolition of the Capitulations which Mallet refused to grant before the war was over, although he thought that the Entente should strengthen the hands of Said Halim and Djavid, in order to enable them to stand up to the pro-German party.²

The Foreign Office, however, made the question of strict neutrality a sine qua non for Britain's agreement to fulfill that part of the agreements of 29 July 1913 which did not involve Germany. Hakki tried to obtain the Customs increase which Parker and Clerk were ready to grant, but Crowe and Nicolson, already suspicious about the "obscure and uncertain" position of the Porte, did not fail to make this conditional upon the release of

1 Mallet to Grey, 20.8.14, tel. no. 572.

2 Buchanan to Grey, 20.8.14, tel. no. 409. Same to same, 21.8.14, tel. no. 310. Mallet to Grey, 20.8.14, tel. no. 574. Same to same, 20.8.14, tel. no. 575. Same to same, 21.8.14, tel. no. 583.

British ships and cargoes, guarantees for the free use of the Straits, the withdrawal of the German crews and the dismantling of the German wireless installations.¹

It was Crowe more than anybody else in the Foreign Office who disbelieved the Porte's promises. Thus the news that the Porte was fostering mobilization was for him further evidence that they meant to go to war. He also expected the Porte to continue their "game" with Britain until the boilers of the "Goeben" were repaired by 2 September. He was not interested in Mallet's report on a "sharp struggle" between Jemal and the pro-German party on one side and the "Moderates" on the other, or that Wangenheim and Liman were pushing the Porte, if necessary by making Enver dictator, into war with Russia.²

When Sazonov suggested that Mallet join Giers in making representations to the Porte with regard to Ottoman military movements around Erzeroum, Crowe thought this was useless so long as the Entente was not ready to follow them up by further measures, otherwise it would just encourage the Porte. When Benckendorff brought the Djavid-Giers discussions concerning an Entente guarantee to the knowledge of the Foreign Office, Crowe's reaction was: "I think this method of bargaining is neither wise nor dignified." The same distrust of the Porte was shown by the French Minister for Foreign Affairs. Sazonov now demanded that in addition to the withdrawal of the "Goeben" crew the German officers in the Ottoman army should also be dismissed, was accepted as natural by the Foreign Office.³

1 Minute by Parker, 20.8.14. Urgent. Minutes. ED.X.ii.p. 420.Ed.Note.

2 Buchanan to Grey, 21.8.14, tel. no. 311. Minute, 22.8. Mallet to Grey, 21.8.14, tel. no. 591. Minute, 22.8.

3 Benckendorff to Nicolson, 21.8.14. Minute, 22.8.ibid./42007. Same to same, 22.8.14. Minute, 23.8. ibid./42088. Bertie to Grey, 22.8.14. tel. no. 256. Minute by Oliphant. Buchanan to Grey, 23.8.14, tel.no. 319. Minute by Crowe, 24.8.

Mallet, however, was much more optimistic than the Foreign Office. He felt it was important to pass over incidents which could not be passed over in normal times and thought an effort should be made to change the "violent" hostility towards Britain which was significant in all classes. But he also advised that they take cautiously the statements made by Ottoman statesmen, as the one made by Jemal that a coup d'etat by Enver was impossible.

By late August Mallet received the Ottoman promises on neutrality with more suspicion than before but still felt "fairly confident that unless allies suffered serious and continued reverses Turkey would remain quiet." At least one Young Turk statesman, Halil Bey, the influential President of the Chamber, spoke his mind and thus enabled the Embassy to be sure about the crucial connection between the course of the War and the Porte's decision to join it. By 9 August he told Block that German victory was assured both at sea and on the continent. Such a victory would give a better chance to the Ottoman Empire which would be "very much" threatened in the event of an Entente victory since Russia would foster her Pan-Slavist policy. The Ottoman Empire would thus be like Persia, and at Russia's mercy.

Mallet, however, was still lagging behind the Foreign Office in his expectations. He therefore continued to persuade the Foreign Office

1 Mallet to Gray, 23.8.14, no. 592. same to same, 23.8.14, tel. no. 596. account to Gray, 13.8.14, no. 560, conf. Hinton.

that not only a written declaration on Ottoman integrity and independence was "most important" but that also an undertaking that Britain was ready to negotiate at once, "in a sympathetic spirit", a special convention to narrow the scope of the Capitulations. The idea was that these concessions would serve as a "counterpoise" to German activities. The Foreign Office, though ready to give an assurance over the Capitulations, was not too ready to rush into a "hasty sacrifice".¹ Mallet's impression was that "forces" in favour of strict neutrality were gaining ground. But he did not fail to tell Said Halim that Britain would not tolerate both the Ottoman army and the navy in German hands. The Foreign Office hoped that Mallet's evaluation was correct.²

By 25 August Mallet started to press the Foreign Office for a written guarantee to uphold Ottoman integrity and independence and also to allow them economic freedom. These, he added, were necessary in order to preserve the Porte's strict neutrality by helping the "moderates". The Foreign Office agreed to Mallet's demands and he was authorised to grant them to the Porte.³ But this was in fact only a useless concession, since Parker had convinced the Foreign Office that granting economic freedom to the Porte would have no real influence on the question of Ottoman neutrality. No concessions should be made to them without a quid pro quo.⁴

1 Mallet to Grey, 23.8.14, tel. no. 602. Minutes, 24.8.

2 Same to same, 24.8.14, tel. no. 607. Minute by Oliphant, 25.8.

3 Mallet to Grey, 25.8.14, tel. no. 617. Minute, 26.8. Grey to Mallet, 26.8.14. tel. no. 435.

4 Mallet to Grey, 26.8.14. tel. no. 620. Minutes, 27.8.

But not all Mallet's despatches were optimistic. He did not close his eyes to the worsening situation: the arrival of German sailors via Sofia, the German urge to close the Straits, the feverish mobilization in both army and navy and the story that Germany was inducing the Porte to join the war in ten days time after France was defeated. In such a case, Mallet predicted, the "Goeben" could do "much" damage in the Black Sea. He advised the Foreign Office that if the British Government was thinking of forcing the Dardanelles, a "rapid and complete success would alone justify attempt, as failure would mean disaster here, and have most serious effect everywhere." He admitted that the situation was "most unsatisfactory, though not actually desperate."¹

The Foreign Office's attitude on the question of Moslem public opinion also indicated that there were no illusions in London as to the coming war with the Ottomans. Hardinge, though astonished as to the Porte's policy, did not propose to issue any explanatory statement to the Moslems unless war was inevitable, since they were "enthusiastically" loyal. But the Foreign Office felt that it would be well to prepare the "Indian mind" for a rupture between Britain and the Porte by explaining that the arrival of the "Goeben" had especially interfered with British trade and that if Ottoman crews were substituted for Germans, and British merchant shipping was not impeded, and the Porte remained neutral, their independence and integrity would be respected.

1 Same to same, 26.8.14, tel. no. 628. Grey to Mallet, 24.8.14, tel. no. 438. The Military Attaché opposed the forcing of the Dardanelles in favour of a landing in Persian Gulf or Syria. Mallet to Grey, 27.8.14, tel. no. 630.

2 India Office to Foreign Office, 26.8.14. Minutes by Clerk and Grey, ibid./43829. Foreign Office's letter for publication in India. Hardinge to Chisolm, 19.8.14. Pte. HP, 93. Same to same, 27.8.14, Pte. ibid.

Mallet too was gradually moving towards a more sceptical view of the situation. He was haunted by the idea that the Entente might find it necessary to force the Straits and by the possible occupation of Constantinople in order to ensure success. He again emphasized that failure would have "disastrous" influence, and still preferred, if possible, to postpone the "final reckoning" with the Porte until the war was over.¹

Realities, however, were too strong even for Mallet. He told Said Halim that even if Jemal and Enver were to oppose the "Goeben" entering the Black Sea, Souchon could not be prevented from doing so: "so long as German crews remained Grand Vizier was not master of his house, but at the mercy of Germans, who had practically occupied Constantinople." A "greatly agitated" Said Halim did not deny that the Germans would like them to abandon neutrality but promised that they were determined not to fall into that "trap". Mallet argues that Ottoman sincerity could be tested only if in such an event the British fleet was admitted into the Dardanelles with permission to occupy and destroy the forts. The Entente Ambassadors to the Porte were all of the opinion that even if provoked, an anti-Ottoman action should be postponed until a convenient moment for the Entente.

The Foreign Office agreed with Mallet's view and decided to leave it to his judgment to say when it would be expedient for Britain to withdraw the Embassy staff, the Naval Mission and British officials in Ottoman service. The Foreign Office also left it to Mallet to decide when a warning should be given to British subjects and shipping.

1 Mallet to Grey, 27.8.14, tel. no. 632.

Crowe went as far as suggesting an "explicit" agreement with Greece to cover the event of an Ottoman attack. This was important in order to preserve Britain's position in the Moslem world.¹

Though Mallet did not know about the existence of the Ottoman-German alliance, he was aware, as everybody else in Constantinople, of the growing German involvement in the Ottoman Empire and he was far from concealing this information from the Foreign Office. He maintained at the end of August that the administration was so entirely in German hands that the position of the Naval Mission and the five British advisers would at any moment become "very" embarrassing.

There are many reasons for withdrawing them at once, he wrote but I should be reluctant to relinquish the struggle until the last possible moment unless I am instructed by HMG to announce their recall to the Ottoman Government. 2

Mallet also observed that the arrival of the German sailors again proved that the Germans were in "complete" control. He suggested that they suspend discussions respecting the "Sultan Osman" and the "Reshadieh". The accumulated information on the German involvement convinced everybody in the Foreign Office, that "Turkey's neutrality is demonstratively non-existent". Clerk concluded that the only way to save the situation might be to rush the Dardanelles, "desperate though such a solution may seem". Crowe reiterated what he had felt for "a long time" that the Porte was "merely trying to gain the time necessary for the preparation of the contemplated hostile action". The Foreign Office was now concerned with one question alone: how to withdraw safely all the British in the Ottoman

1 Mallet to Grey, 27.8.14, tel. no. 634. Same to same, 27.8.14, tel. no. 636. Minutes 28.8. Grey to Mallet, 28.8.14, tel. no. 451.

2 Mallet to Grey, 28.8.14, tel. no. 639. Minute. 29.8.

service, the Naval Mission and the Consular and Embassy staff.¹

Mallet continued to provide more information as to the Germanisation of the Straits but strangely felt that there was still some hope of saving the Porte's neutrality. The Foreign Office found it necessary to instruct Mallet to point out to the Porte that if they turned against Britain the consequences might be "very serious" for them. On this occasion (29 August) Grey also warned that in such a case Britain would consider her position in Egypt, and might feel free to support the Arabs against the Porte, and another Moslem authority for Arabia and control of the Holy places.²

What Mallet was doing was following a dual policy about which he kept the Foreign Office informed. On the one hand he advised the Foreign Office to guard itself against possible Ottoman attack by considering an operation which should be "swift and certain". On the other hand he found it "hard" to believe that the Porte would go to war against Russia or Britain. His reason was the "strong impression" which he had that the Ottoman Cabinet, with the exception of its "extreme chauvinists", was aware of Germany's intentions of involving them in war. It is hard to see on what he based this optimistic attitude except on Said Halim's persistent promises that the Porte would not abandon neutrality, or the hope that "time may cool their [the Porte's] ardour for their German masters." He also tried to

1 Mallet to Grey, 27.8.14, tel. no. 635. Minutes, 28.8. Barclay to Grey, 27.8.14, tel. no. 52. Bax-Ironside to Grey, 28.8.14, tel. no. 70.

2 Mallet to Grey, 28.8.14, tel. no. 642. Grey to Mallet, 29.8.14, tel. no. 461. Same to same, 29.8.14, tel. no. 462.

persuade the Foreign Office not to regard war between the Porte and Greece as a casus belli. But the die was already cast in the Foreign Office, for Greece was told that if the Porte, joined Germany Britain would welcome them as an ally. In addition the Foreign Office found it "hard to believe" that the Porte's mind had not already been made up definitely.¹ If this is not enough to show that by the end of August the Foreign Office was pretty sure that the Porte's entry into the war was inevitable, Grey cabled to Washington saying that Constantinople was full of German officers and a coup d'état might take place. In such an event he asked that the United States Ambassador should take over British interests. The decision when to leave Constantinople had already been left to Mallet's judgment on 16 August.²

The Foreign Office was distinctly more pessimistic than Mallet. But the latter was trying consistently to persuade the Foreign Office as to the correctness of his point of view. He told the Foreign Office that he had enough cards in his hands with the declaration of integrity and independence and Egypt's status without mentioning the Arabs and the Holy places. He opposed it for two reasons: the handle it might give to Germany and the danger to the efficacy of any movement in Arabia if the Holy places were mentioned. The Foreign Office agreed with Mallet's view but said that the Government of India should give, once the Porte joined the war, "every support and encouragement" to the

1 Mallet to Grey, 30.8.14, tel. no. 653. Minutes, 31.8. by Oliphant, Clerk, Crowe, Nicolson and Grey.

2 Grey to Washington, 31.8.14, tel. no. 370. Grey to Mallet, 31.8.14, tel. no. 473.

Arabs to take control of Arabia and the Holy places.¹ What the Government of India asked was just that they should be authorised to announce publicly that no attack would be made by British forces or their allies on the Holy places or Jeddah provided that pilgrimage was not disturbed. Hirtzel of the India Office thought that this would not prevent Britain from assuring the Arabs that in the event of the Porte joining the war, if they expelled the Ottomans, Britain would "maintain" them as "custodians" of the Holy places. He felt that this was a card which could be played usefully, although "I am not sure that in the long run the Arabs will not be more dangerous propagandists of Panislamism than the Turks."

Clerk was cautious in giving the Arabs more than an assurance against attack. Encouragement could be "definitely settled" only after the actual breach with the Porte. Nicolson and Grey were less careful and stated that once the Porte joined the war, the Arabs should be given every support to gain Arabia and that all preparations should be made at short notice.²

1 Mallet to Grey, 31.8.14, tel. no. 658. Grey to Mallet, 1.9.14, tel. no. 478.

2 Viceroy to India Office, 31.8.14. FO/371/2139/44923. Hirtzel to Clerk, 31.8.14. Minutes. Foreign Office to India Office, 1.9.14. Secret. ibid./44923. In Egypt Cheetham thought he was following the proper line when he sent one of his intelligence officers to tell Aziz Ali that he had the "highest" authority to inform him that Britain could not support the idea of a "United Arabian State" with money and armaments since it was "most inopportune". However, Kitchener minuted: "All depends on how Turkey acts. . . If Turkey breaks out action in Arabia under our auspices would naturally follow." Cheetham to Grey, 24.8.14. no. 143. Secret Minute, 5.9.

The main scene remained at Constantinople where Mallet was doing his best to extract daily assurances from Ottoman statesmen that they would not go to war. Said Halim, Jemal and Djavid did not hesitate to promise that soon German crews would leave the country. The Foreign Office did not place any confidence in their assurances. But Mallet was never informed about their attitude. Nevertheless, he did not fail to inform the Foreign Office that the Dardanelles was being rapidly fortified and manned by Germans, which the Foreign Office regarded as a serious step since by the time the Porte entered the war the Dardanelles would become a "tough nut". But surprisingly this ominous information did not deter Mallet from maintaining that he was convinced that "a current has set in against adventurous policy." In order to justify his view he claimed that the country was ruined by the mobilization and the people were frightened. He also stated that Giers, Block and "many" others shared his view that the Porte meant to stay neutral, though he admitted they had not given any "concrete proof".¹

The Foreign Office, however, went on their own path. In early September Mallet suggested that he should be allowed to state publicly that if the German crews left, British trade remained undisturbed and the Porte stayed neutral during the war, the British fleet would be withdrawn from the Dardanelles. Grey was not ready to go that far, agreed only to state that the Porte would have "nothing to fear

1 Mallet to Grey, 1.9.14, tel. no. 663. Minute by Oliphant 2.9. Same to same. 1.9.14, tel. no. 672. conf. Minute by Crowe, 3.9. Same to same, 1.9.14, tel. no. 661. Minute by Clerk, 2.9.

from British ships" and refused to promise their withdrawal.¹

On 1 September the Entente Ambassadors presented to Said Halim in draft form for consideration, the declaration on integrity and independence. But Mallet could not conceal that he "hardly" expected the Germans to allow the Porte to accept the Entente proposal in view of their supreme influence in Constantinople. Mallet was also discouraged by information from Morgenthau, the American Ambassador, that Talaat had stated that they would not bind themselves by any agreement on neutrality.² This setback, however, did not change the basic course which Mallet had adopted, and for which, it must be admitted, he obtained the Foreign Office's acquiescence. It was in fact a dual policy which might be regarded as a contradiction, but nevertheless it had its own logic, and it was more than Mallet's independent policy, since he was never reprimanded for it by the Foreign Office.

Thus, in accordance with this line Mallet by 4 September suggested to the Foreign Office that if war with the Porte was inevitable one of the "most effective" weapons would be an "Arab movement". He warned that if such a movement was vague in its objects it would lead to nothing. The movement he had in mind was one which should be directed by Ibn Saud, the Sheikh of Koweit and other friendly Arab chiefs. Its first object should be "to attack and hold

1 Same to same, 2.9.14, tel. no. 679. Grey to Mallet, 4.9.14, tel. no. 493.

2 Mallet to Grey, 3.9.14, tel. no. 685.

Baghdad temporarily and await events." With British help in money and armaments this should not be difficult in view of the friendly population, especially as the Porte would be busy fighting Russia. After Baghdad the situation in Arabia would be "immediately" effected. Again everything should be done through Ibn Saud in consultation with Miss Bell and Captain Shakespear. He concluded:

I much prefer this proposal to that of forcing the Dardanelles, which would be pulling the chestnuts out of the fire for Russia, and which . . . is daily becoming a more difficult operation. Capture of the place would be comparatively easy for a military power, but difficult in present circumstances for a naval Power, and in any case impossible to hold without a large land force. I need not again repeat that we should on no account be hurried into action even if situation becomes intolerable here, but that if necessary we shall break off relations and bide our time.

But the Foreign Office felt that it was mainly for the Government of India to decide on this question, in terms of policy and strategy in the event of war. But as long as peace prevailed the Foreign Office's role was to restrain the activities of the Indian officials in the Persian Gulf.¹

The Viceroy was meanwhile developing his own views. He did not go as far as Mallet and saw the occupation of Basra as the main goal, believing that a rebellion between Fao and Gurnah could be initiated through the Sheikhs of Koweit and Mohamerah and Ibn Saud without "any" British stimulation. He also believed that the Imam and Idrisi and the Sherif of Mecca could be influenced to act against the Porte. As to Moslems in India he was most reassuring as he felt only the educated classes would regard a rebellion in Arabia with

1 Mallet to Grey, 4.9.14, tel. no. 692. Minutes by Clerk and Crowe, 5.9. See also: Extract from a letter from Miss G. Bell, 5.9.14 in War Office to Foreign Office, 9.9.14. FO/371/2141/48014.

regret.¹ However, the information of the War Office Intelligence Department in Egypt ran contrary to that of the Government of India and of Mallet. It said that the Porte was making great efforts to win over the principal Chiefs in Arabia and had hitherto achieved "considerable success", especially in the case of the Sherif of Mecca who had "almost certainly" gone over to the Porte. These efforts were moreover only a part of a general Pan-Islamic movement which aimed at India, Egypt, Tripoli and "all" Moslem countries.²

Mallet, meanwhile, continued to follow up his optimistic policy. He now informed London that there were "many" indications that the situation at Constantinople had improved. But his proofs were rather slim: the almost daily assurance that the German crews would leave and the growing discontent among "influential" people. His discussions with "many prominent" people convinced him that, unless there were surprises, opinion would change in Britain's favour. He called upon the Foreign Office to keep the Russians calm in order to ensure success.³

Mallet did not know that on 4 September Grey and Churchill had committed themselves to Greece. They instructed Admiral Kerr, the Head of the British Mission, to open "strictly private and secret" discussions with the Greek authorities as to the right policy against the Porte in the event of war, but not to provoke the latter in the

1 Viceroy to India Office, 4.9.14. Pte. *ibid.*/46490. He also suggested action against the Hedjaz Railway from Egypt. The Admiralty too was enthusiastic about using the "Arab movement" as "very valuable element" in an operation in Mesopotamia. Admiralty to F.O., 9.9.14. *ibid.*/48001.

2 Cheetham to Grey, 7.9.14, no. 149, conf. Minute by Grey, 24.9.

3 Mallet to Grey, 5.9.14, tel. no. 707. Mallet to Grey, 6.9.14. tel. no. 710.

meantime.¹

At the same time, Mallet spoke very sharply to Talaat, whom he informed that because of the presence of German officers, military and naval, Britain regarded the Ottoman Empire as a German protectorate. He expressed his surprise that the Porte attached no importance to the Entente's written declaration concerning Ottoman integrity and he cynically added that he personally was relieved, since "to guarantee integrity and independence of Turkey was like guaranteeing life of man who was determined to commit suicide." His conversation with Talaat convinced him that it was "extremely probable" that in the long run the Porte would fight against the Entente.²

Meanwhile a sudden deterioration occurred in the already much shaken Anglo-Ottoman relations. On 7 September Mallet reported that there was fresh evidence that no genuine sale of the German ships had taken place, and he had brought this to Said Halim's attention. It was not until the next day that Mallet decided that the right conclusions should be drawn. Now he informed the Foreign Office that in his opinion he could "very reasonably" suggest that the Naval Mission be withdrawn. He maintained that their raison d'être was being "neglected" since they were placed in a "humiliating" situation by ever-increasing control of the Germans over the Ottoman Navy.

1 Grey to Elliot, 4.9.14. tel. no. 171. Secret. First Lord of the Admiralty to Elliot, 4.9.14, tel. no. 170. Most Secret.

2 Mallet to Grey, 6.9.14, tel. no. 715, conf.

It was indicative of Mallet's optimism that he claimed that there was "nothing" in this to cause "very serious" concern. But at the same time he asked for the Foreign Office's approval for the measures he already had taken to deprive the Ottoman fleet of steam coal supplies. He felt that the Porte's conduct provided Britain with "extremely" opportune moment for withdrawal.¹

It seems that the Admiralty had reached the same conclusion quite independently when Mallet's despatch reached London. They decided that the position of the British Naval Mission had become "undignified" and might also be "unsafe". They suggested further that the Mission be attached to the Embassy until a safe way could be found to bring them home. But the Foreign Office, who knew exactly what they were after when they had backed Mallet's policy asked Mallet what an effect such a step would have on the political situation:

I am reluctant [wrote Grey to Mallet] to take any step however justified that will precipitate unfavourable developments as long as there is a chance that these may be avoided. I wish therefore to have your views before any decision is taken by HMG.

Churchill however, overruled Grey's hesitations and ordered Limpus and his staff to leave, after the Ottoman navy had been "paralysed" by German intrigues.²

1 Mallet to Grey, 7.9.14. tel. no. 717. Grey to Mallet, 8.9.14, tel. no. 521. Mallet to Grey, 8.9.14, tel. no. 727.

2 Grey to Mallet, 8.9.14, tel. no. 528. Same to same, 9.9.14. tel. no. 537. Secret and Urgent Message from Churchill.

Was Mallet himself shaken by these developments ? It seemed very little. He vigorously continued his campaign now rather to postpone the Porte's entry into the war than to get them to observe strict neutrality. Thus when Limpus was on 9 September appointed to succeed Troubridge as the Commander of the British fleet in the Dardanelles, Mallet's reaction was one of very strong opposition. He claimed that the effect of such an appointment would be "disastrous" and produce a crisis at a time when the situation was beginning to be more favourable. Mallet moreover saw this question as a touchstone for the Foreign Office's confidence in his policy. But he first attempted to persuade the Foreign Office on the merits of the question itself. Though he favoured the withdrawal of the Naval Mission he admitted that it would be a "shock" for the Porte. Now that Britain intended to appoint Limpus to the command of the fleet on the other side of the Dardanelles, which the Ottoman treated as an hostile one, there could be no doubt that this would be exploited by the Germans, and could lead to the renewal of the anti-British agitation, and further even to the detention of the Mission itself. The result would be a complete defeat for the British. Such a step, exclaimed Mallet, would "ruin" the Porte's confidence in him and endanger his own position at Constantinople: "It would be very difficult for me to remain here, as any influence I have is due to their confidence in my good faith."* He foresaw that the suggested appointment would lead to the closing of the Straits and demonstrations against British subjects. At a time

* Foreign Office's italics.

when the population was excited by the abolition of the Capitulations he could not say what would be the consequences for foreigners. He laboured to explain that the Russian Ambassador was also of the opinion that war must be avoided in order to prevent any setback to Russia in her Austrian campaign. He also enjoyed the support of his French, Italian and American colleagues, who "constantly" asked him to "restrain" Britain. If this was not enough, Mallet also argued that Britain was accused (by whom he did not explain) of being responsible for the present difficulties by detaining the Ottoman ships and letting the "Goeben" escape. He then came to the real point when he said that his colleagues, Limpus, the British Advisers, Block and all those who knew the country, with whom he was in touch, were all of the opinion that the situation was far from desperate. Limpus, who opposed the withdrawal, told him that the Ottoman fleet was "intensely" hostile to the Germans and it was only a question of time until their feelings would again be pro-British. But Mallet, contrary to Limpus, felt there was no purpose in the continuation of the Mission since the Germans were de facto in control.

Grey was initially "astonished" to hear that the suggested appointment of Limpus was considered by Mallet as so harmful. His reaction revealed that the Foreign Office had consistently given full support to Mallet's attitude: "Of course we want to avoid war, and appointment of Admiral Limpus implies no change of policy." Grey and Churchill, however, recognised the force of Mallet's arguments and Limpus was instead ordered to proceed to Malta. But it had also been decided to make a final effort with Jemal to save the Mission's face. Churchill hoped that in view of the news of Russia's success

against Germany Jemal might ask the Mission to stay.¹

But Mallet soon dissipated the Foreign Office's hopes. He announced the withdrawal to Said Halim, and Talaat, but neither asked for the cancellation of the withdrawal. Mallet told them that even if they wanted they could not send away the Germans as the latter were the real masters. But nevertheless Mallet seemed to be convinced by the Grand Vizier that the "peace party" was making "great progress" and that the announcement of withdrawal would help his efforts to maintain strict neutrality. The Foreign Office again agreed that Mallet could not have put Britain's position forward in a better manner, even while believing in Said Halim's empty promises that he, Said Halim, was sure of the final victory as he was gaining strength "every day": "Once demobilised he could assure me that there would be no more militarism [sic] in Turkey." Most astonishing is the Foreign Office's reaction to Mallet's assertion that "situation is improving daily but that danger of Minister of War under German influence sending "Goeben" with transports into the Black Sea is not diminished by the fact that his position is not so secure as it was." "This telegram", commented Clerk, "shows the power of the extremist inner ring of the CUP, and it looks much as though our efforts will after all be vain". Nicolson's remark is even more surprising "Sir Lewis Mallet is making a gallant fight, but in these cases it is usually the extremists who win the day." Whether Mallet was really

1 Grey to Mallet, 9.9.14, tel. no. 538. Secret and Urgent. Mallet to Grey, 10.9.14. tel. no. 738. Urgent. Same to same, 11.9.14. Pte. tel. conf. GP.80. Same to same, 11.9.14, *ibid.* (Second letter from the same day). Same to same, 11.9.14. (Third letter from the same day). *ibid.* Same to same, 12.9.14, tel. no. 756. Grey to Mallet, 12.9.14. tel. no. 556. Secret. Same to same, 12.9.14. Pte. tel. GP.80.

persuaded by the fact that Said Halim had strongly condemned the military party as "brutes" and by his incessant struggle against them, or doubted it himself but used it in order to persuade the British Government to be more compromising one cannot say.¹

Liamus' withdrawal coincided with another crisis, though not of the same magnitude. This was the Ottoman decision to abolish the Capitulations on 9 September. Mallet tried to explain to Said Halim that they could not be abolished unilaterally. Britain could not allow British subjects to be judged by courts martial especially at a time when the army was in German hands. Here again, as if afraid that the Foreign Office might react very strongly, he stated that his French and Russian colleagues were "very insistent" that Britain should not break off relations with the Porte on that account. They all agreed that the Capitulations had practically been abolished. Nevertheless, they wished "at all cost" to avoid the rupture for which Germany was waiting. Once more Mallet felt that he was doing his best to fulfil Britain's vital needs and policies: "I entirely agree that, pending successful developments in main theatre of war, we should not burden ourselves with Near Eastern complications and all that may arise from them." In the Foreign Office, however, there was no inclination to make the abolition a casus belli. On the contrary, they suspected that the Porte might use it as a pretext to come into the open. It was the last time that the European Concert asserted itself in the Eastern question, but it was now insignificant. The Concert had already proved itself a failure long before and nobody had any doubts as to the futility of its final

1 Mallet to Grey, 13.9.14, tel. no. 766. Minute by Clerk, 14.9.
Grey to Mallet, 14.9.14, tel. no. 558. Same to same, 15.9.14,
tel. no. 782. Conf. Minutes, 16.9.

manifestation. Mallet supported by Morgenthau, believed that now that the Porte had given "vent to their feelings in this form", they might "settle down without a war." He advised against making an issue of it since the "paramount" consideration was to keep the Porte neutral. British interests could be safeguarded after the war as the Porte would be in great financial need. He warned against making the abolition of Capitulations a condition about neutrality, and with a good reason: "It will give the Turks the impression that we are afraid of them and ready to buy their neutrality by concessions." The Foreign Office complied with Mallet's views but only for a while.¹

Meanwhile Bompard, supported by Mallet, renewed the suggestion that the Entente Powers should once more offer to guarantee the integrity and independence of the Porte. It had, however, to be extended beyond the war, "Otherwise it will be valueless in Turkish eyes." In the Foreign Office Clerk showed some readiness to agree to suggest once more the guarantee offer but he was troubled by its binding force for Britain both in terms of time and extent. His reason was one which included the needs of Britain's future policy:

¹ Mallet to Grey, 9.9.14, tel. no. 732. Same to same, 9.9.14, tel. no. 735. Minute by Clerk. Same to same, 9.9.14, tel. no. 736. Same to same, 10.9.14, tel. no. 741. Same to same, 12.9.14, tel. no. 763. Same to same, 14.9.14. tel. no. 770. Minutes, 15.9. The Capitulations had been first granted to Britain by the Sultan in 1675 and up to 1809 they were unilateral. In that year they were reaffirmed by the Treaty of the Dardanelles and acquired a bilateral character. Minute by Clerk, 12.9. in: Mallet to Grey, 11.9.14, tel. no. 754.

"It is a serious question for us, since the possibility of the Arabs asserting their independence, and perhaps successful, always exists, and it would be fatal if we had to intervene on the side of Turkey." But Grey decided that Britain could not make further promises to the Porte beyond those which had already been made if they kept peace during the war.¹

By 15 September Mallet, supported by Bompard and Giers, called upon his Government to make concessions to the Prte by consenting to the abolition of the fiscal and commercial treaties, while the Porte on their part would agree to defer the abolition of the judicial Capitulations. Mallet also proposed to apply the 15% Customs duties which was of no importance because no goods were coming into the ports, and the application of the temettu to foreigners. In his opinion these concessions were essential at this moment because of the growing danger that the Germans would be successful in persuading Enver to send the "Goeben" and the rest of the fleet into the Black Sea to create a diversion in view of the Allied successes. Since he believed that Capitulations were the "principal" card in the hands of the "peace party", he felt that if these concessions were not granted "peace party will lose their influence and their heads, and throw in their lot with extremists."

But the Foreign Office rejected Mallet's proposals, mainly because they were pessimistic as to the ability of the "moderates" to save the situation. They suspected, moreover, that the Porte,

¹ Mallet to Grey, 14.9.14, tel. no. 770. Minute by Clerk, 15.9.
Grey to Mallet, 15.9.14, tel. no. 560.

being "completely" in the Germans' pockets, were playing the Germans' game and would succumb to their pressure to create a diversion against the Allies, especially at the time when they were forced to retreat beyond the Marne after their futile advance on Paris. The Foreign Office was therefore in no mood to make concessions, as Clerk explained:

Either Turkey will fight against us, or the reckoning when peace comes will be so heavy that it would have been better that she should have fought and been beaten. In my humble opinion we are very near the limit of possible concession, and I am not yet convinced that even the CUP have lost all sense of prudence . . .

Grey accepted Clerk's view: concessions would not be made because this might be regarded as a sign of weakness by the "Extremists" and would not really strengthen the hands of the Grand Vizier. Britain would be ready to make "reasonable" concessions about Capitulations, but not at a time when German officers and crews were still in the country. If the Porte could not keep peace Britain could not be responsible for "any" consequences.¹

As far as the events behind the scenes at Constantinople were concerned it seemed that Mallet's hopes and expectations were not entirely unjustified. The struggle between the interventionists and their opponents was a fact, and in mid-September Enver was defeated by the unanimous opposition of the Ottoman Cabinet. As a result of this he had to cancel his authorisation to Admiral Souchon, dated 14 September, which had instructed him to attack

1 Mallet to Grey, 15.9.14, tel. no. 785. Very Conf. Minutes, 16.9. Grey to Mallet, 16.9.14, tel. no. 562.

the Russians in the Black Sea. This was a victory for the anti-war party headed by Said Halim and Djavid over the war party headed by Enver and Jemal.¹

But Mallet's influence upon the Foreign Office was limited. Very little good-will now remained in the Foreign Office towards the Porte and there was no longer any belief in the "moderates". The Foreign Office now found another reason to reject Mallet's demands for concessions. Sazonov insisted that the abolition of the Capitulations should be made a sine qua non for Ottoman neutrality.²

Mallet, still hoping to persuade the Foreign Office to make the concessions maintained that though he believed that it was worthwhile to support Said Halim and the "moderates", he also felt that the Naval Mission should be withdrawn as a warning. He advised the Foreign Office accordingly: "I am of opinion that we should still bluff through, whilst at the same time insisting that we expect more than words. I bring daily to Minister of Interior's notice instances of partiality." At the same time, however, he was trying without success to bring home the kind of struggle, which indeed existed in the Porte: "It must be remembered that so long as the army is mobilised and so long as Minister of War is generalissimo, Cabinet is not in a position to enforce its will and must temporise to some extent."³

1 Trumpener, op. cit., pp. 39-44.

2 Mallet to Grey, 17.9.14, tel. no. 802. Minutes, 18.9. Grey to Mallet, 18.9.14, tel. no. 570.

3 Mallet to Grey, 17.9.14, tel. no. 801. Minutes, 18.9. Same to same, 18.9.14, tel. no. 807.

Mallet tried his luck also with Halil, another influential CUP statesman. Mallet did not know that Halil had supported Enver and the pro-German faction in their policy of alliance with Germany, and was taken in by Halil in believing that he was in favour of neutrality. Halil was nevertheless correct in stating that the Ottoman Cabinet wished to remain neutral, but Mallet's conclusion was doubtless not exaggerated when he summed up the situation: "Although party in favour of neutrality is growing, it would not be safe to rely on their power to restrain war party, although I do not regard the situation as hopeless." This was a clear retreat by Mallet from his faith in the "moderates", and was quickly taken up by the Foreign Office where Oliphant commented: "I fear the outlook is exceedingly black". In another letter of the same day Mallet called Enver just a "firebrand", and Oliphant added: "But a firebrand of the largest size."¹

Mallet himself found it necessary to harden his language towards the Grand Vizier and his peace party. On 20 September he showed, in a discussion with Said Halim, how little influence was left to him as a result of Enver's independent policy. He told him that there must be between 4,000 and 5,000 German soldiers and sailors in the country, which had become an "armed camp". Mallet's statement that the country and the Cabinet were at the mercy of Enver and Liman caused a strong and "violent" reaction on Said Halim's part, who promised that if crisis came he would find means of stopping Enver.

¹ Mallet to Grey, 19.9.14, tel. no. 809. Minute, Kurat, p. 297.
Mallet to Grey, 21.9.14, tel. no. 813. Minute, 21.9.

Mallet concluded that the Grand Vizier was sincere and all Ministers "peaceable", though Enver's supremacy made an incident possible. Nicolson of all the people in the Foreign Office hoped that the peace party would "eventually" shoot Enver, relying on Said Halim's hint.¹

But Enver's supremacy did not deter Mallet from pressing the Foreign Office to make unconditional concessions to the Porte. He supported his case by maintaining that Ciera was ready to give up "anything" in order to gain time, but he, Mallet and Bompard were against going too far. The Foreign Office, however, was far from being enthusiastic about it, especially with regard to the 4 per cent Customs increase. They still considered this a "valuable" weapon, and refused to agree to Mallet's solution that Britain could obtain her "own terms" at the end of a successful war. It was decided in London to say nothing more about the concessions and to "let the Ambassadors worry it out between themselves." Grey himself took the opportunity to explain Britain's policy to the Grand Vizier. It did not show complete despair but certainly was less hopeful than before. He mentioned that Britain was "very dissatisfied" with the situation, especially over the presence of the "Goeben" and the "Breslau" and the fortification of the Dardanelles by the Germans:

. . . in the hope that the peace party will get the upper hand we have not hitherto taken action, but the Grand Vizier should realise that his party must succeed soon in controlling the situation and bringing it within the limits of neutrality, or it will become clear that the real control at Constantinople is no longer Turkish, but German, and the Germans will force open hostility.

1 Same to same, 20.9.14, tel. no. 819. Minute, 21.9.

Grey added privately to Mallet: "The part you have yourself taken is very much appreciated and has brought you much credit."¹

Although by now the Foreign Office took a less hopeful view than Mallet, Grey was still ready to give another chance to Mallet's policy. This was indeed remarkable in view of Churchill's suggestion of hardening the line. He remarked that the "Poor Mallet telegrams" were marked by the constant belief that the peace party was both gaining in strength and becoming increasingly helpless in controlling Enver and the Germans. But far from despising Mallet's policy, he sympathised "deeply" with the "futile and thankless task on which he is engaged". What he did suggest was a more rigid policy towards the Porte instead of the one which attempted to buy off the Porte by promises and concessions, at the time when Germany was penetrating deeper and deeper and was preparing the country for war:

. . . in our attempt to placate Turkey we are crippling our policy in the Balkans. I am not suggesting that we should take aggressive action against Turkey or declare war on her ourselves, but we ought from now to make our arrangements with the Balkan States, particularly Bulgaria, without regard to the interests or integrity of Turkey. The Bulgarians ought to regain the Turkish territory they lost in the Second Balkan war. . . Turkey's conduct to us with repeated breaches of neutrality would release us from any need of considering her European interests. . . I do most earnestly beg you not to be diverted from the highway of sound policy in this part of the world, both during the war and at the settlement, by wanderings into the labyrinth of Turkish duplicity and intrigue. 2

Independently of Churchill, the Foreign Office had indeed decided to adopt a more rigid attitude. The reason was the "disquieting" news

1 Grey to Mallet, 23.9.14, tel. no. 581.

2 Churchill to Grey, 23.9.14. Pte. GP. 88, quoted also in: Churchill, The World Crisis, 1911-14, pp. 492/3.

about the arrival of more than 2000 cases of shells for the "Goeben" and the fortresses, mines for the port of Alexandretta and the stoppage of all passenger and goods traffic on the Hadjaz Railway. The time had come, it was realised in the Foreign Office, to refuse further concessions in view of the "cumulative effect" of Ottoman-German preparations. Clerk felt that further concessions would only be interpreted as "signs of fear and weakness". Nicolson agreed and added that although Mallet had fought a "good battle", it was "more and more evident that the military party is predominant". The Porte's policy which had not waited for an agreement over the Capitulations and demanded instead full economic freedom, was also a help to Britain, supported by France, in adopting an anti-Ottoman policy. Mallet was hopeful with regard to the judicial side of the Capitulations when in late September the Porte promulgated a law which increased the Customs duties to 15 per cent and extended the temettu to foreigners with effect from 1 October.¹

At about this time Ottoman-German preparations against Egypt, comprising a movement in the direction of Akaba and El-Arish and the incitement of the population in Egypt started to worry the British. Mallet, however, was still "strongly" of the opinion that the policy hitherto pursued was "the best suited to our interests", which he regarded as an attempt to avoid playing the German game. But Mallet had in fact given up his hope that the peace party might be able to dismiss the Germans from the country, and thought that at the "most" it could be hoped that the peace party, headed by Said Halim, would prevent the Porte from openly joining Germany. Mallet together with

¹ Mallet to Grey, 23.9.14, tel. no. 840. Same to same, 23.9.14, tel. no. 841. Minutes 24.9. Grey to Mallet, 24.9.14, tel. no. 586.

Giers believed that it was worthwhile to "try and pull through" by temporising as long as possible in order to avoid war. In the Foreign Office, where the last shreds of faith in the Porte's neutrality were fast disappearing, scepticism prevailed as to Mallet's "hard work" with regard to the Capitulations. Nicolson, following the Military Attaché, thought Britain was "safe" as regards Egypt, but war was possible from the Ottoman point of view either in Thrace, or on the Russian frontier or in the Black Sea.¹

On 19 September the Porte dealt another blow to the Entente Powers by announcing the closing of the foreign post offices from 1 October. Mallet attempted in vain to press for the Porte's agreement for the British post office becoming a section of the Ottoman post office, even though both Giers and Bompard felt that the Porte's decision could not be resisted. In order to avoid breaking off relations Mallet maintained that under the Minister Oskan Effendi the Ottoman post office had been improved. In face of this new decision, Clerk and Nicolson concluded that since every day the Porte's demands increased it was time that Britain showed her teeth: "The Turks will respect nothing else". France's weariness strengthened Britain's view that "doubtless a change on the part of the allies is becoming necessary." Grey, however, decided to wait. Though it was agreed in the Foreign Office that the British case was not a strong one, it was considered as "essential" to show that Britain would not give up under threat. It was finally decided to reject Mallet's suggestion

¹ Mallet to Grey, 26.9.14. Pte. GP.80. Same to same, 27.9.14, tel. no. 875. Minutes by Clerk and Nicolson, 28.9. Same to same, 28.9.14, tel. no. 884. Minutes. Same to same, 21.9.14, tel. no. 823. A territorial Division was expected in Egypt on 26th. ibid. Minute by Kitchener, 22.9.

that British officials should work under the Ottomans.¹

It was now Britain's turn to strike a blow against the Porte. The initiation came from Mallet and concerned the movement of the Ottoman navy outside the Dardanelles. On the morrow of Limpus' leave Mallet warned each Minister separately and in writing that the Ottoman fleet would be treated as an enemy if it were found outside the Dardanelles. Mallet's fears grew when he discovered that the British fleet could be threatened by torpedoes. He preferred taking "slight" risk rather than making another representation to the Porte. But Grey and Churchill thought it would be "better and safer" to tell the Porte that as long as their fleet was under German control they must not send the ships out to sea. This amounted in fact to a British blockade against Ottoman warships. A further reason for the decision was the superiority of the Ottoman fleet against the British and the rumours that the former were leaving for Smyrna.²

Britain was however tightening her control in the Shatt-el-Arab region as well as in the Dardanelles area. The Admiralty had decided that as long as the "Goeben" and the "Breslau" remained un-interned, Britain would maintain a naval force in the Shatt-el-Arab. The Foreign Office thought that though this was justified it was "rather dangerous and provocative" to give such a reply to the Porte, since Britain had requested only the repatriation of the German crews.

1 G.P.O. to Foreign Office, 20.9.14. Minute by Oliphant. FO/371/2142/5125. Mallet to Grey, 22.9.14, tel. no. 830. Same to same, 23.9.14, tel. no. 839. Minutes, 24.9. Same to same, tel. no. 843. Grey to Mallet, 25.9.14, tel. no. 588. Mallet to Grey, 25.9.14, tel. no. 852. Minutes, 26.9. G.P.O. to Foreign Office, 25.9.14. Minute, 27.9. ibid./53201.

2 Mallet to Grey, 16.9.14, tel. no. 796. Grey to Mallet, 20.9.14, tel. no. 574. Mallet to Grey, 21.9.14, tel. no. 825. Elliot to Grey, 21.9.14, tel. no. 227. Mallet to Grey, 24.9.14, tel. no. 844. conf. Grey to Mallet, 25.9.14, tel. no. 594.

Nicolson told the Ottoman Ambassador, who had protested against the presence of the "Odin" and the "Lawrence" and their use of wireless, that they were entitled to use wireless and that the Porte had committed more flagrant breaches of neutrality. He rejected the parallel of Belgium's neutrality by stating that while Belgium had been anxious to preserve her neutrality, the Porte had "deliberately" departed from their own declared neutrality. Crowe even suggested by the end of September the dispatch of troops to the head of the Gulf.¹

This uncompromising attitude was also possible because Pan-Islam no longer constituted a danger as far as the Government of India and the India Office were concerned. Mallet, however, thought that it might be worthwhile to induce the leaders of the Moslems in India, like the Nizam of Hyderabad, publicly to refute the allegations made by German agents that Britain was the enemy of the Caliphate and Islam. The Viceroy did not see any effects of Pan-Islamic propaganda and thought Mallet's suggestions would be playing into the hands of the Pan-Islamists and might tie Britain's hands if the Arabs expelled the Ottomans from the Holy places. He reassured the British Government moreover that if the Sultan declared Jihad it would prove a failure as far as the "vast" majority of the Indian Moslems were concerned.²

The Embassy was indeed still haunted by the Pan-Islamic bogey, and its role in the event of war. Ryan, the Acting Chief Dragoman, had

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- 1 Mallet to Grey, 18.9.14, tel. no. 805. Admiralty to Foreign Office, 20.9.14. Minutes, 21.9. ibid./51192. Minute by Nicolson, 22.9.14. ibid./52046. Viceroy to India Office, 21.9.14. Secret. ibid./51935. India Office to Foreign Office, 23.9.14. ibid./52381. Grey to Mallet, 25.9.14. tel. no. 587. Minute by Nicolson, 26.9.14. India Office to Foreign Office, 26.9.14. Minute by Crowe, 29.9. ibid./53604.
 - 2 Mallet to Grey, 8.9.14, tel. no. 725. Viceroy to India Office, 15.9.14. Secret, ibid./51580. India Office to Foreign Office, 21.9.14. Secret and Immediate. ibid. Grey to Mallet, 23.9.14, tel. no. 580.

suggested that Britain in the event of war would be able to cause the Porte's "vast amount of harm in the part of Arabia north and west of the above line [Aden to Katr] up to the confines of Syria and Mesopotamia up to, say, Mosul." But he advised against encouraging any movement in Hedjaz and the Yemen. If done openly it might be a "challenge" to the Moslem world. If done secretly it would create "scandals" and raise questions which were better not raised unless Britain had prepared "concrete and positive" answers. He dreaded the possibility in this event of Britain having to create a new Caliphate or sharing the odium for destroying the existing institution. He preferred to see a reduced Ottoman rule, at least as the theoretical sovereign of the Holy places. As for the Yemen, Ottoman influence was "little" and an anti-Ottoman movement there could do little damage. The Imam was unfriendly to Britain and by consolidating his power she could lose more than she would gain since he could not be made dependent on her. Ryan, on the other hand, favoured a "new system" to replace the Ottoman one, based on Ibn Saud, the Sheikh of Koweit, and "one or more of the Northern chiefs". As to the "new system" itself it should be one of "stable authority strong enough to administer but weak enough to be dependent on us in the immediate neighbourhood of the two rivers, while leaving the tribal chiefs a free hand further afield until the time comes as it might ultimately, for us to assume more definite responsibilities." Even there, in Nejd and Mesopotamia, he suggested that any encouragement must be as secret as possible.¹

In London however, the opinion was different. Here Kitchener instructed Cheetham to send secret messengers to Abdullah to ask him if, should "German influence at Constantinople coerce Khalif against his will and Sublime Porte to acts of aggression", they would side with

1 Memo by Ryan in: Mallet to Grey, 22.9.14, no. 604, conf.

Britain or fight against her. This followed earlier information that the Sherif of Mecca had been almost won over by the Porte.¹

Little did the Embassy know that by this time General Barrow and Admiral Slade had impressed upon the Foreign Office, in the name of the India Office and the Government of India, that they were "seriously alarmed" at the effect on the Arabs of their "absolute" inactivity in view of Ottoman war preparations and provocations. Captain Shakespear supported this view saying that it would menace Britain's position not only in Arabia but also in Egypt and the Persian Gulf. He suggested therefore that they promote at once Ibn Saud and the Arabs against the Porte. The Indian authorities, supported by Crew and Kitchener, suggested to the Cabinet that they divert part of the Poona division to the head of the Persian Gulf, and to land it in Mohammerah, ostensibly to defend the Admiralty oil pipeline. If this landing was carried out before the beginning of hostilities it would have a "steadying influence" upon the Porte.²

The end of September saw a considerable change in Mallet's views. He now recommended a new policy towards Ibn Saud:

During the early months of this year, when the Porte appeared to be acting in good faith, I deprecated an appearance of intrigue with this chief, but, in view of what has occurred since the outbreak of the war, I think that we should be fully justified in entertaining friendly relations with him.

But it was now for the Foreign Office to show caution and circumspection while Mallet seemed to abandon these virtues. Clerk, supported by Nicolson, stated that Mallet's new attitude was a "significant indication"

1 Kitchener to Cheetham, 24.9.14, tel. no. 219. Secret. Cheetham to Grey, 7.9.14. no. 149. conf.

2 Minute by Crowe, The Arabs and Turkey, 26.9.14. FO/371/2139/53671.

that he had doubts as to the Porte's will to maintain peace. Basically it was agreed in the Foreign Office that friendly relations with Ibn Saud were desired, but there was no intention of following this policy until the Porte joined the war definitely and that the Arabs should be approached cautiously. Surprisingly the reason for this was the kind of optimism which Mallet used to maintain:

It will be disastrous [Clerk minuted] if we have subsequently, owing to Turkey showing a more reasonable spirit, to withdraw from any advances made to Ibn Saud. I think we should certainly 'tater le terrain' only, with great care. 1

However, in early October the Foreign Office was careful officially to deny at the Porte a statement published in the "Daily Telegraph" of the previous day dealing with "an alleged critical situation" between the Porte and the Entente. Grey expressed regret that it had been published since it did not represent his views "in any way".²

The situation was critical enough at this stage. The Porte attempted to score an advantage by the closure of the Dardanelles. Enver ordered this on 26 September after a British destroyer stopped an Ottoman one outside it. Now Said Halim promised its reopening if the British fleet moved "a little further" from the entrance towards Lemnos. The Foreign Office was however adamant in its refusal where it was thought that "the closer the watch [after the German ships] the better."

1 Mallet to Grey, 30.9.14. tel. no. 899. conf. Minutes, 1.10. Foreign Office to India Office, 5.10. ibid. The Foreign Office was influenced also by the "big success" the Porte scored in the Arabs eyes in the question of the closure of the foreign post offices. Mallet to Grey, 1.10.14, tel. no. 907. Minutes, 2.10.

2 Grey to Mallet, 2.10.14, tel. no. 623.

Mallet supported Said Halim's request on the grounds that it was important to avoid all causes of friction as, so the Grand Vizier claimed, the result was considerable excitement since they thought that Britain had intended to attack them. The Foreign Office was considerably advanced in its distrust of the Turks: ". . . had we wanted to attack, we should not have waited until the German officers and men, and the laying of mines, had made the straits impassable. The Grand Vizier's pretext is flimsy." Nicholson reacted vehemently claiming that the removal of the fleet would be "injudicious" in view of the Ottoman preparations against Egypt. Besides he attached "little importance" to Said Halim's promises; "He is not the governing factor at Constantinople."¹

Mallet still insisted, now on different grounds, that Britain should not let the Straits remain closed. Its re-opening, he maintained, would be regarded as a diplomatic success, while the acquiescent acceptance of its closure would be considered as a sign of weakness. Clerk refused to accept Mallet's point since the removal of the British ships would be regarded as a sign of weakness but Grey, though agreeing with Clerk, also stated he had "much confidence" in Mallet "who is on the spot". It was in any case soon proved that there was nothing in Mallet's claim that Said Halim needed an excuse to reopen the Straits. Mallet reported on the 3rd October that the Dardanelles had been closed not only by an administrative act but also by mines, put there by Germans too. The next day the British Fleet was instructed to prevent the shipment of coal to the Ottoman Fleet.²

1 Mallet to Grey, 27.9.14, tel. no. 880. Minutes by Clerk, Nicholson and Grey. Same to same, 27.9.14, tel. no. 879. Same to same, 28.9.14, tel. no. 885. Minute, 29.9. Same to same, 29.9.14, tel. no. 890. Minutes, 30.9. Grey to Mallet, 30.9.14. tel. no. 615.

2 Mallet to Grey, 1.10.14, tel. no. 904. Minutes, 2.10. Grey to Mallet,

Meanwhile the situation in the Shatt-el-Arab was becoming dangerous. On the 3rd the Vali of Basra warned the British Consul that British men-of-war had to leave the Shatt within 24 hours since the river from Fao to Gurna was inland waters like the Dardanelles and Smyrna and thus closed to foreign warships. Mallet though he warned the Grand Vizier of the consequences of taking measures against H.M.'s ships, maintained that Britain's case was weak except as a reprisal for the Porte's breaches of neutrality elsewhere. He warned that the Porte might close the Shatt altogether. Mallet was however ignorant of the real reason for keeping ships in these waters which was to protect the £2,000,000 recently invested in Abadan, and to prepare for eventualities at Fao, Basra and Baghdad.¹

On the 6th the Porte hardened their line and decided that the whole Shatt and the sea within six miles of shore were to be territorial waters and closed to warships. Guns would fire on any man-of-war. This policy presented the British Government with a serious dilemma, for both Abadan and Mohammera were now to be in Ottoman waters. They had now either to abandon all British interests and subjects in Baghdad, Basra and Abadan or to risk a collision which might start the war. The Foreign Office strengthened by the Indian authorities who claimed that a blocked Shatt might disturb the landing of troops at Abadan refused to accept the new Ottoman regulations for territorial waters. It was now the Porte who yielded to the British, and Said Halim declared that instructions had been sent to the Vali of Basra to avoid all incidents with British warships.

2.10.14, tel. no. 627. Mallet to Grey, 3.10.14, tel. no. 917. Same to same, 3.10.14, tel. no. 923. Grey to Mallet, 4.10.14, tel. no. 636. Same to same, 4.10.14, tel. no. 635.

- 1 Mallet to Grey, 1.10.14, tel. no. 910. Grey to Mallet, 2.10.14, tel. no. 624. Mallet to Grey, 4.10.14, tel. no. 927. Same to same, 4.10.14, tel. no. 931. Minutes, 5.10.

They also referred the question to their legal advisers. But Mallet still thought that a breach might occur over this question because of what he called "the division of authority" at Constantinople.

In the Foreign Office, the Vali of Basra's threats were regarded as mostly "bluff", as Clerk supported by Grey minuted on 11 October,

Turkey will not go to war with us, or risk an incident which will lead to war, because of the presence of British men-of-war in the Shatt-el-Arab, but because she thinks it is to her interest to fight us. The only question therefore for us to decide is whether the situation in the Shatt-el-Arab . . . gives Turkey such a plausible pretext as, in the eyes of the world and especially of the moslem world, to justify her in seeking redress by force of arms and to overshadow her glaring and long-continued breaches of neutrality. If it be held that it does, then we ought to reconsider our attitude, but, in my humble opinion, it does nothing of the sort.

Further it was said that if Britain yielded to the Porte over the Shatt it would destroy her prestige with the Arabs and throw them to the Porte's side.¹ Another attempt by Mallet to persuade the Foreign Office to compromise failed because faith was no longer placed in the Ambassador's policy of more concessions: "the more we give way", said Clerk, "the more the Turks will be encouraged to ask." In addition the Admiralty would probably reject such a "humiliating" course towards a country which called itself neutral. Crowe and Nicolson were also adamant in their refusal, and the latter who was convinced that Britain had made all "reasonable" concessions added: ". . . though Turkey has not yet gone to war it is probably because the Germans and Enver have not yet quite completed their preparations." In the official reply to the Porte's Note

¹ Mallet to Grey, 6.10.14, tel. no. 939. Minutes, 7.10. Grey to Mallet, 7.10.14, tel. no. 644. Mallet to Grey, 7.10.14, tel. no. 944. Same to same, 10.10.14, tel. no. 952. Minutes, 11.10. Grey to Mallet, 11.10.14, tel. no. 659.

however Britain stated she was ready to re-examine her attitude in a "most friendly" spirit if the Porte properly fulfilled their neutrality in the question of the "Goeben" and the "Breslau". Mallet's argument that HMS "Espiegle" should leave Mohammara on the grounds that otherwise the "Moderates" would be weakened in their anti-war campaign, was entirely unacceptable to the Foreign Office and they were supported by the British Resident in the Gulf who maintained that it might encourage the Vali to exert new pressures and make a bad impression in the Gulf region.¹

As far as the Shatt was concerned a serious aggravation of the situation occurred after October 21st when the Sheikh of Mohammara informed the British Consul that the Porte intended to lay mines. "One more nail in the Turkish coffin", was Oliphant's reaction. The Admiralty thought that the British ships should prevent this, while the Foreign Office warned the Porte that any such attempt would be regarded as an "act of open hostility and provocation". Britain reserved her right, which had been confirmed by the Anglo-Ottoman agreement of July 29 1913 to take her "own measures" to see to it that the Shatt remained free as an international highway. On 30 October the "Espiegle" was instructed to prevent any Ottoman attempt to sink a ship on the Shatt and to remove any mines. If fired upon, operations could be started including the landing of the expedition from Bahrein.²

1 Mallet to Grey, 11.10.14, tel. no. 958. Minute, 12.10. Same to same, 12.10.14, tel. no. 959. Minutes. Grey to Mallet, 13.10.14, tel. no. 663. Mallet to Grey, 12.10.14. tel. no. 962. Same to same, 12.10.14, tel. no. 963. Minutes, 13.10. Viceroy to India Office, 14.10.14. Secret. Minutes. FO/371/2142/59744. Grey to Mallet, 17.10.14, tel. no. 681.

2 Admiralty to Foreign Office, 21.10.14. Secret. Minutes, 22.10. ibid./62013. Grey to Mallet, 23.10.14, tel. no. 698. Viceroy to India Office, 21.10.14. Secret. Minute, 22.10. Grey to Mallet, 30.10.14, tel. no. 724A.

By early October Seyyid Talib came to see the British Consul at Basra and told him that the Porte's intention to enter the war did not "suit" him and that he would like to enter into negotiations with Britain. He also mentioned his conversation with Kitchener of three years before and asked if he might be reminded that the time had come. Kitchener himself remarked: "This man might be useful, he has large party." Mallet, however, was still far behind the Government in London since he proposed that Talib should be given a "friendly but evasive" reply. But Clerk played the role of Mallet's censor. He crossed out from Mallet's proposed reply to Talib the Ambassador's references regarding the "maintenance of Turkish integrity in Asia as a British interest", and that "interests of Arabs of Mesopotamia will be best secured by their forming an integral element of Turkish Empire under a tolerant and intelligent central Government . . . if he [Talib] is going back on his reconciliation with Turkey under the impression that war is inevitable he is making a mistake". Mallet also added a "very confidential" comment, that in time of war Talib might be needed "but he has been too much in both camps to justify any confidence in him". But whatever Mallet's opinion, the British Government was already committed to what they called the necessity of securing "Arab good-will". The Foreign Office finally decided upon a reply which omitted, as Clerk had suggested, "the maintenance of Turkish integrity in Asia as a British interest", but, surprisingly included, as suggested by Mallet, that "HMG have every sympathy with the Arabs, and they have always hoped, and indeed still hope, to see Arabs forming an integral part of the Turkish Empire under a tolerant and intelligent central Government". If war erupted, continued the Foreign Office's reply, Britain would "remember" that she was at war with the

Ottoman Government rather than with the Arabs.¹

Britain had however more confidence in rulers such as the Imam and the Idrissi, especially when they had been informed that the Porte was urging these two rulers to cease fighting against each other, and that the "Governor-General" of the Yemen was raising an army and had discussions with the Imam. The Resident suggested they take definite action to enlist them on Britain's side. In the Foreign Office it was felt that in view of Mallet's recommendation to approach Ibn Saud and the news about money being distributed by the Porte amongst Arab chiefs, Britain should rather make a start "soon" before the Porte could win them over.²

At this stage Fitzmaurice who had been recommended by Ryan as an "expert" on "questions relating to Arabs", was called upon to give his views. His general assumption was that in the event of war Britain's policy should be "to render her [the Ottoman Empire] innocuous by every means at our command, regardless of such minor considerations as the future administration of parts of her present territories, or even the question of the Caliphate. According to his opinion the so-called "Arab nationalist movement for autonomy" was "distinct and strong" until the re-capture of Adrianople in July 1913. It would probably revive, and embarrass the Porte "exceedingly" if the latter joined the war against the Entente. The effect would be even greater if encouraged by Britain from Koweit and by France from Syria, where the Christians supported the

1 Mallet to Grey, 7.10.14, tel. no. 941. Same to same, 7.10.14, tel. no. 942. Minute, 8.10. Grey to Mallet, 10.10.14, tel. no. 655. Grey's declaration to the Cabinet on 2 November that Britain "must finally abandon the formula of 'Ottoman integrity', whether in Europe or in Asia", was no more than a formal approval of what amounted to a de facto abandonment of that formula after August 1914; quoted in W.A. Renzi, "Great Britain, Russia, and the Straits, 1914-1915", Journal of Modern History (1970), p. 5, n. 23.

2 Resident at Aden to Viceroy, 30. 9.14. Minute, 1.10. ibid./54700. Mallet to Grey, 5.10.14, tel. no. 936. Minute by Clerk, 6.10.

Entente. Fitzmaurice believed that Britain should use Mohammera as a centre for acting against Mesopotamia. Moreover, in Baghdad, the majority were Shias, and had never been reconciled to Ottoman methods since the province had been transferred from Persia in the middle of the 17th century. He also reminded them that the Shias of Persia and India always resented the possession of their Holy places at Kerbela and Nejef by the Ottomans. As to the future administration of Mesopotamia in the event of a successful anti-Ottoman movement Fitzmaurice recommended the kind of rule which governed Mohammera which "ought not to constitute great difficulty". Little did they know what their Government had in store for the area, after the war. As for the Caliphate, though he regarded it as an internal matter of Islam, he still thought that it might prove "not an unmixed evil" for Britain since there was a probability that an Arab Caliph might replace the Ottoman one and thus remove the "sting" from Pan-Islam which had its roots in the union of the spiritual and temporal powers in the "Turkish Vatican of Islam" at Constantinople. He agreed with Ryan that it would be "undoubtedly" wise to exclude the Yemen and the Hedjaz from the sphere of Britain's anti-Ottoman activities. As for Syria it might be the "best field" for these activities if the points of view of France and Cairo could be reconciled.

In the Foreign Office Ryan's and Fitzmaurice's views with regard to the exclusion of the Yemen and Hedjaz were rejected as it would not be "practical" to leave them both out of Britain's activities. The Porte had been instigating the Hedjaz against Egypt and had tried to obtain the support of both the Imam and Idrissi. Fitzmaurice's recommendation concerning Syria was however accepted by the Foreign Office and they decided to seek

France's cooperation without delay.¹

Already by 10 October the Foreign Office enquired as to the local feeling in Syria and Lebanon on a possible war or an attack on Egypt. The Consuls in Beirut, Damascus and Jerusalem reassured the Foreign Office that there was little or no enthusiasm at all amongst the local population either over preparations for war against Britain and her Allies or for a campaign against Egypt. They claimed moreover that there was discontent over the "wholesale" military requisitions and military service. In Syria where a "general" expectation of British occupation prevailed, the population while outwardly pro-German were at heart well-disposed towards Britain. Only in Palestine were anti-British feelings reported to exist amongst "certain classes" of Moslems, but even there a "large part" of the population hoped for a British occupation. The Foreign Office concluded that Syria, Lebanon and Palestine were friendly to Britain. This evaluation was approved in "great measure" by Mark Sykes but he had told Oliphant that Beirut was "unworkable" though further south "a useful feeling might if necessary be produced and cultivated."²

1 Mallet to Grey, 22.9.14, no. 604. Memo by Ryan, op. cit., Memo by Fitzmaurice 11.10. Minutes, 13.10. (Oliphant, Clerk, Crowe and Nicolson). Lord Crew, however, opposed any action in the Yemen, and regarded the creation of "a powerful politico-religious entity in Arabia with great misgivings". The matter must be left to the Moslems themselves and should not be encouraged even indirectly. India Office to Foreign Office, 19.10.14. FO/371/2140/61238. On cooperation with the French, Cambon and Nicolson agreed as to Consuls' cooperation as to countering the Porte's propaganda in Syria. Grey to Mallet, 20.10.14, tel. no. 685. Mallet to Grey, 27.10.14, tel. no. 1067.

2 Grey to Mallet, 10.10.14, tel. no. 656. Mallet to Grey, 12.10.14, tel. no. 965. Minute by G.H. Nicolson, 13.10. Same to same, 12.10.14, tel. no. 966. Same to same, 12.10.14, tel. no. 967. Minute, 13.10. Mallet to Grey, 14.10.14, tel. no. 976. Same to same, 14.10.14, tel. no. 979. Minute, 15.10.

As late as 15 October, reporting on the growing German activities in Palestine for an attack on Egypt, Mallet still believed that the situation was not without hope. He thought that military action by the Porte was unlikely and though they took "great" interest in Egyptian politics their main interest was the Balkans. But London was also informed of and influenced by, the views of the Egyptian authorities who naturally displayed a greater apprehension over the military preparations. The Foreign Office no longer took Mallet's hopes into account in view of the Porte's aggressive attitude towards Egypt, and the beginning of hostilities was on the 16th regarded as a "question of days", with Nicolson already thinking of the information over the German-Ottoman military preparations as suitable for a future Bluebook. Further information only strengthened the Foreign Office in their views that an Ottoman attack was imminent, though the Military Attaché thought that the attack on Egypt would only be of subsidiary nature.¹ However, the British Commander in Egypt anticipated an Arab raid guided by Germans at any moment.²

However, with what seemed to be Cheetham's connivance, adherents of the "Pan Arab movement" in Cairo sent "reliable" agents to Arabia, Syria and Palestine in order to communicate to Arab chiefs Britain's message.

1 Mallet to Grey, 15.10.14, tel. no. 968. Minute, 16.10. Cheetham to Grey, 17.10.14, tel. no. 202. Grey to Cheetham, 18.10.14, tel. no. 269. Mallet to Grey, 18.10.14, tel. no. 1003. Minute, 19.10. Same to same, 4.10.14. no. 619. Minute, 22.10. Same to same, 19.10.14, tel. no. 1010. Same to same, 23.10.14, tel. no. 1038. Same to same, 16.10.14, no. 652. It seems, however, that Mallet's recommendation against supplying the Maronites with arms was accepted. Mallet felt that this might drive the Porte to occupy the Lebanon notwithstanding its special status. Grey to Mallet, 19.10.14, no. 2 Pte. and Secret. Mallet to Grey, 21.10.14. Pte. and Secret. ibid./62044.

2 Grey to Mallet, 22.10.14, tel. no. 694.

They also were instructed to dissuade them from joining the Porte. The leaders of the movement stated that they did not for the moment expect more than a "benevolent" attitude and moral support. But if war came and more than passive resistance was expected of them they should be provided with arms and ammunition. Though it was felt that the arms question presented difficulties it seemed that the Foreign Office had also agreed to support the "Pan Arab movement". Cheetham recommended that these agents who had been sent to Koweit should be given every assistance by the British Resident with whom they ought to work in "unison". Surprisingly at this very late hour on 28 October, Mallet was trying to persuade the Foreign Office that the Porte wanted to gain time before committing themselves to Germany. This policy on the Porte's part would enable Britain to postpone the war for "some months". In these circumstances he thought that any policy which amounted to an encouragement for Arab provinces to break away from the Ottoman Empire would precipitate events and bring war. He called for "profound" secrecy in Britain's negotiations with the Arabs and warned against any written agreement. In the Foreign Office nothing could convince Crowe and others that they had acted "too soon".¹ Nevertheless the Foreign Office, the India Office and Mallet all seemed to agree that Seyyid Talib could not be given a written guarantee, as he might well demand, Mallet warned them of his well-known "unreliable and elusive character", and the Viceroy suspected that if such a written guarantee were given to Talib, he might transfer it to the Porte and it might be used against Britain. Hardinge maintained that they could not recognise Talib as Sheikh or Amir of Basra under British protection, but he could be "informally" told that his eventual position in the event of war would depend on "degree of his interference and extent to which he uses it in our [British] interests." Neither was Hardinge prepared, as

1 Cheetham to Grey, 26.10.14, tel. no. 223. Minute by Oliphant, 27.10. Same to same, 28.10.14, tel. no. 228. Mallet to Grey, 28.10.14, tel. no. 1091. Minute by Crowe, 29.10.

Fitzmaurice had suggested, to use Shia resentment against the Porte as a propaganda measure for the dismemberment of "Turkish Arabia" since Indian Moslem "opinion" was "almost entirely" Sunni.¹

Meanwhile Sherif Abdullah replied to Britain's overture in a "guarded but friendly and favourable" way. He expected a written promise that Britain would not intervene in Arabia's internal affairs and would guarantee it against foreign intervention. Secretly he expressed himself more freely: "Stretch out to us a helping hand and we will never aid these oppressors." Kitchener in his reply was careful to emphasize that the Ottoman Government had joined the war against the Sultan's wish and that if the "Arab Nation" assisted Britain, they would obtain what they asked for. By this time Grey had no objection to the declaration Kitchener had made to Abdullah: "It may be that an Arab of the true race will assume the Caliphate at Mecca or Medina and so good may come by the help of God out of all evil which is now occurring."²

When hostilities broke out Britain secured the support of the Sheikhs of Koweit and Mohammara, of Ibn Saud and of the Sherif of Mecca, but while she was carefully avoiding disreputable people like Talib, she did appear to sympathise with the political activities of the "Pan-Arab movement."³

1 Viceroy to India Office, 28.10.14. ibid./64904. Minute by Oliphant, 29.10. India Office to Foreign Office, 28.10.14. ibid./64873. Viceroy to India Office, 31.10.14. Secret. ibid./66303.

2 Cheetham to Foreign Office, 31.10.14, no. 233. Foreign Office to Cheetham, 31.10.14, no. 303.

3 Captain G.F. Clayton informed Aziz Ali on 26 October that it was "out of the question" for Britain to assist any movement against "a Power with whom she was at peace", but she certainly acquiesced in their anti-Ottoman propaganda. Cheetham to Grey, 15.11.14. no. 177. As for Talib, by early December the Foreign Office finally realised

Britain however, instead of relying on the remote possibility of a "revolt" of the Mesopotamian army, as suggested by Aziz Ali, sent her own expeditionary force to Bahrein rather than to Abadan. The force arrived on 23 October and Nicolson considered it as "welcome news". The India Office thought that their arrival should be made a matter of "utmost publicity" amongst the Arabs to whom it should be also emphasized that they had no aggressive designs save the defence of Britain's interests together with those of her allies in view of the Ottoman-German military preparations.¹

Contacts with the Sherif of Mecca were not the only preparations made by London of which Mallet knew nothing. Another matter was the question of the status of Cyprus in the event of war. Here too the Foreign Office did not have any hesitation in advising the Colonial Office to prepare for its annexation. The Foreign Office did not, as had Mallet, have any illusions that the outbreak of hostilities was not just a question of time. As late as 7 October Mallet maintained that it remained to be seen whether Said Halim had power to restrain the military. But Nicolson left no doubt as to London's opinion: "One must have a robust faith to imagine that the Grand Vizier has any influence or authority." Thus the Foreign Office refused to consider Mallet's suggestion of making concessions to the Porte in matters of economic freedom in view of their "growing" hostility towards Britain. Crowe called upon Mallet on 9 October to consider carefully

that he was "certainly a rascal, but a very dangerous one". This led Clerk to the conclusion that: "He will now be against us, and, unless we are lucky enough to kill him fairly soon, can do much harm." India Office to Foreign Office, 1.12.14, Minute approved by Crowe, Nicolson, Grey and Kitchener, 2.12. ibid./77724. On Koweit's firm support: S.G. Knox, Resident in the Gulf to the Government of India, 25.8.14. Memo by W.G. Grey, 22.8.14. FO/371/2144.

1 Hardinge to Nicolson, 8.10.14, Pte. NP. 375. Viceroy to India Office, 24.10.14. ibid./63562. Same to same, 28.10.14. Secret. Minute, 29.10. ibid./65446.

"whether in our desire to placate Turkish Government we do not risk increasing their appetite for still further concessions. . ."¹

But Mallet maintained that acceptance of Ottoman demands was essential if Britain still wanted to postpone the war, and perhaps avert it altogether as her main object. He called upon the Foreign Office to exercise patience and warned against the danger of war if German intrigues were not to be countered. Though Crawford told Talaat on the 11th that it was impossible for him to continue, Mallet urged that the Advisers should stay as long as he [Mallet] did as "it is important that they should maintain their influence in this country if war is avoided and the situation improves." But the Foreign Office was afraid that it might risk the Arabs loyalty especially in the Persian Gulf if Mallet's policy were accepted. They found it necessary to calm Mallet as to the danger of Bulgaria joining the Porte and to tell him that the fall of Antwerp was only a local German success.²

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By 9 October Enver informed Wangenheim that Talaat and Halil had agreed to support his policy of war, but Halil changed his mind on the 11th, and Talaat now wished to postpone the Ottoman intervention until the 22nd. Nevertheless on 11 October Enver, Talaat, Halil and Jemal declared that Souchon would be ordered to attack the Russians as soon as the German Government deposited T£ 2,000,000 in Constantinople. This was done on the

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- 1 Colonial Office to Foreign Office, 5.10.14. Minutes, 6.10.-12.10. FO/371/2143/56311. Mallet to Grey, 7.10.14, tel. no. 945. Minute, 8.10. Same to same, 5.10.14, tel. no. 932, conf. Grey to Mallet, 9.10.14, tel. no. 651. Trumpener, p. 47 n. 66.
 - 2 Mallet to Grey, 10.10.14, tel. no. 956, conf. Same to same, 11.10.14, tel. no. 957. Minute, 12.10. Grey to Mallet, 11.10.14, tel. no. 660. Same to same, 11.10.14. Pte. tel. ibid./58206. Mallet to Grey, 13.10.14. no. 642. Minutes, 3.11.

16th and the 21st.¹

Mallet was as usual over-optimistic. Now he believed in the "revelations" of Rahmy, Vali of Smyrna that he and Talaat were determined to avoid war and to keep the Ottoman Empire neutral against the wish of Enver and the "Chauvinists". He was inclined to accept Rahmy's claim that they were gaining ground and that the Porte had gained many achievements without going to war, like the acquisition of the "Goeben" and the "Breslau". Whilst this strengthened his faith in Said Halim's assurances that he would not let the Ottoman Empire join in the war, Mallet admitted to the Foreign Office that it was "not very easy" to see why the Grand Vizier was not avoiding preparations for war, since he would find it difficult to prevent intervention once they were completed. If Talaat was really determined not to go to war he could do so in an oriental country like the Ottoman Empire. His reply to Rahmy was even stronger. He reminded him of Ottoman hostility and preparations against Egypt which were going "too far" and appealed to him to curb them otherwise Britain's friendship would be "permanently" alienated. Mallet was to mention Rahmy's "anti-German" attitude and his "dismay" of war with Britain a few years later in 1917 to defend his belief in the "Moderates". He believed that neither he nor his Consul at Smyrna had been deceived by Rahmy. The truth was that Mallet had been misled into believing that Rahmy was as "powerful" as he had been earlier after the 1908 Revolution.²

1 Truspener, pp. 48-51, 53. Kurat, pp. 307-8, 311. See also: Crawford to Tyrrell, 26.11.14, ibid./77254.

2 Heathcote-Smith (Smyrna) to Mallet, 12.10.14, no. 125. Conf. Mallet to Heathcote-Smith, 15.10.14, tel. no. 91, conf. in: Mallet to Grey, 16.10.14, no. 651, conf. Mallet to Grey, 28.10.14, no. 659. Heathcote-Smith, 17.10.14, no. 129. Mallet's Apologia, 24.8.17, conf. op. cit. Ahmad, The Young Turks, passim. Rahmy is not mentioned by either Kurat or Truspener.

On the same day in which he reported Rahmy's views to London Mallet dismissed the view of Talaat's "most influential" position. This he stated, had been true until the mobilization (3 August), but since then it was Enver who was supreme and Talaat had become "powerless". But as far as the Foreign Office was concerned this was an academic question since it was felt that there was not "much to choose" between Enver and Talaat, and that the latter was abler but just as dangerous, though less prominent.¹

Mallet, however, saw all these setbacks merely as "appearances" and in fact they were not losing ground. He consoled himself that in spite of the presence of the "Goeben" and the "Breslau", the Germans had not succeeded in achieving their main object dragging the Porte into the war. By this time, however, Mallet had developed a poor opinion of Said Halim, "an absolute oriental and true grandson of Mahomet Ali, fanatical, intriguing and barbarous at heart . . .", but at the same time could not altogether question his sincerity. Mallet boasted that he had called him Wangenheim's slave to his face, but spoke with appreciation of his success in preventing war during the last nine weeks. Here was "some proof for his [Said Halim's] assertions", though the Grand Vizier had been helped by the Allies successes. He added in a letter to Tyrrell of the 16th:

I cannot give up hope that if we still continue to exercise patience and if we still have successes as I do not doubt, we may pull it off, and that although we are at the mercy of an incident, it is not I but Wangenheim who will have to leave first. I confess that I should hate to be beaten now by Wangenheim, who is a typically unscrupulous and contemptible form of Teuton. It must not be thought that we could have prevented the abolition of the capitulations or the Post Offices or anything else by taking a different line.

1 Elliott to Grey, 16.10.14, tel. no. 257. conf. Minutes. Mallet to Grey, 16.10.14, tel. no. 933. Minutes, 17.10. The views on Talaat's

Mallet was convinced now that his policy, shared by Giers and Bompard, would be successful if the Entente scored victories in France and Poland. He was sure that until now the situation had been saved by the great victory of the Russians in East Prussia. It is significant, however, that he was ready to give free passage in the Straits to Russia after the war and to dismantle the forts and he added in an anti-Ottoman style not very frequent in his dispatches: "It will be impossible to allow this gate on a great highway to be in the hands of a set of epileptic lunatics for ever."¹

By this time the first news on the shipment of German gold to the Porte came from Russia together with Sazonov's prediction that war would start in a few days. This prophecy was regarded in the Foreign Office as "more than probable". Nevertheless, Mallet continued to calm London, now relying on the Bulgarian Minister and Crawford, that though the situation was "precarious" there was no reason to despair unless Russia suffered a defeat or some accident as Enver might launch a coup d'état with the Germans.² On 22nd Mallet was for the first time in a pessimistic mood. He declined to share Giers' fear that the arrival of German gold was a sign that attack on Russia was imminent. For the first time he also explained the "virulent" Ottoman attacks on Britain as an indication that

prominence were General Sherif Pasha's. Crawford too thought that after 8 October Talaat and Halil became powerless. Crawford to Tyrrell, 26.11.14, ibid./97254.

1 Mallet to Tyrrell, 16.10.14. Pte. GP. 80.

2 Buchanan to Grey, 20.10.14. tel. no. 538. Minute, 21.10. Mallet to Grey, 21.10.14, tel. no. 1020. Minutes, 22.10. Same to same, 21.10.14, tel. no. 1024. Mallet, however, now suffered a personal setback. He learned from a Greek source that "certain extremists"

they meant to justify themselves in the public eye if war broke out. It might also serve as an indication that they intended to provoke war. He saw the Grand Vizier on that morning, who gave him the usual assurances that the Porte would not go to war. For the first time Mallet advised the Foreign Office: "Little importance should be attached to this, as he has no control." But the Foreign Office no longer needed further proof as to the Porte's intention to go to war, regardless of the results of this war. Only Clerk of the whole Foreign Office thought that there was "a faint chance" of avoiding the Porte's joining in the war; if Bulgaria and Servia could be brought together through Russian arbitration and by compensating them after the war with Austrian territories. The attack on the Buxtons in Bucharest (15 October) was, according to Clerk, an indication of the Young Turks' fear that the Buxtons might bring about a Bulgaro-Servian rapprochement. But in the Foreign Office both Nicolson and Grey were satisfied with Bulgaria's assurances to stay neutral and in any case it was too late and too risky a suggestion as it might upset both Greece and Roumania.¹

Mallet was less despairing on the 23rd than on the previous day. He now called for a propaganda counter-campaign in reply to the Ottoman-German one which was spreading rumours about alleged German success in Europe, insurrections in the Egyptian army, and of a general disaffection in India. As to the arrival of the German gold he was less inclined to

had decided on an attempt on his life. Mallet was inclined to take it seriously in view of the "somewhat prominent part" which he played in opposing the war party. He even believed that it might have increased "immeasurably" the danger of rupture with the Porte. Only Talaat's assurance that there was nothing in this "plot" had convinced Mallet. On this occasion Grey sent Mallet one of his usual possibly somewhat exaggerated encouragements, pointing out that he was "full of admiration" for his courage, and praised the "character, resources and ability" that he had shown throughout. Mallet to Grey, 19.10.14. Pte. & Conf. Very Secret. GP. 80. Grey to Mallet, 20.10.14. Pte. tel. ibid.

1 Mallet to Grey, 22.10.14. tel. no. 1027. conf. Minute by Oliphant, 23.10. Minute by Clerk, 21.10.14, Minutes, ibid./62440. Conwell-Evans, op. cit. pp. 96/7.

accept Ciers' correct assessment that war was imminent: "This need not necessarily indicate immediate declaration of war although it seems to fit in with Russian Ambassador's secret information. Country being on the brink of financial ruin money is essential to keep things going and unless Germany considered game here to be lost its supply would have been necessary." His attitude marked a clear volte face from that of the previous day. Now he once more used all available evidence to prove that war was not forthcoming. This included the views of his Bulgarian, Italian and American colleagues. At the same time he noted the French Ambassador's claim which referred to the existence of an Ottoman agreement to join Germany in the war. He further mentioned Jenal's recent promise to Bompard that the Porte would not go to war. But Jenal had spoken of Egypt as part of the Ottoman Empire, whilst Britain treated it as if it belonged to her. Jenal maintained that the Ottomans' feeling about Egypt was similar to that of the French towards Alsace-Lorraine. He told Bompard that Britain and the Porte should sign a convention on the lines of Drusmond-Wolff Convention (1887) providing for the evacuation of Egypt by Britain at the end of the war. Mallet had heard the same story himself from Jenal a fortnight earlier but regarded it as so "unpractical" that he did not report it. Nevertheless, he believed in Jenal's assertions that the Porte would not attack Egypt in a regular way but he warned that they might make raids which could be "equally dangerous". After spending nearly a year in Constantinople Mallet eventually discovered, as he did in the case of Said Halim, that "it is not necessary to attach such importance to Minister of Marine's remarks, as he is very irresponsible."

The Foreign Office, regardless of Mallet's opinion, concluded that Germany was behind the preparations against Egypt in order to "embarrass"

Britain as much as possible, for Germany regarded Egypt as militarily weak. They strongly believed that a full scale attack on Egypt should be expected. Grey immediately informed Mallet to "disabuse" the Porte of any ideas she might have of attack, i.e. Egypt. Any violation of the Egyptian frontier would place them at war with the Entente. He was careful however not to refer to the nature of British rule in Egypt and instead maintained that the Ottoman-German military preparations constituted a threat to the "international" status of the Suez Canal which Britain was bound to preserve. "it will not be we but Turkey that will have aggressively disturbed the status quo."¹

By the 27th Mallet at last reported that ^{ex}pedition against Egypt was now "uppermost" in the minds of Enver, Talat and Jemal, but also that there was "considerable" opposition to the war party in the Committee. The Foreign Office doubted whether there was any effective opposition. It acceded, however, to Mallet's request to make a communication to Said Halim, in company with his Russian and French colleagues, explaining to him that an attack on one Entente Power would involve the Porte in war with the others. On that very day, 28 October, the Foreign Office warned the Porte that as long as the German officers remained on the "Goeben" and the "Breslau" and Ottoman fleet under their control, Ottoman ships, (in this case four gunboats on their way to Alexandretta) would be regarded as hostile and must be stopped in self-defence.²

1 Mallet to Grey, 23.10.14, tel. no. 1033. Same to same, 23.10.14, tel. no. 1037. Same to same, 23.10.14, tel. no. 1039. conf. Grey to Mallet, 24.10.14, tel. no. 705. Mallet to Grey, 24.10.14, tel. no. 1048.

2 Same to same, 26.10.14, tel. no. 1063. Same to same, 27.10.14, tel. no. 1071, conf. Minute, 28.10. Same to same, 27.10.14, tel. no. 1073. Minutes, 28.10. Grey to Mallet, 28.10.14, tel. no. 716. Same to same, 28.10.14, tel. no. 714.

But Enver had finally shaped the fate of the Ottoman Empire when on 25 October he gave a definite instruction to Souchon to attack the Russian fleet in the high seas when a "suitable opportunity" presented itself. Only Talaat and Jemal knew of the forthcoming attack. Thus on the 27th the Ottoman fleet left for the Black Sea where Souchon changed the original plan and decided to attack Russia's coastal bases first. On the 29th, at around 3.30 - 3.45 in the morning, Odessa and Sebastopol were attacked, and the die was cast.¹

Mallet, however, on the very day when Souchon attacked the Russian ports, was looking desperately for signs for optimism. He now found it in Halil's attempt to go to Berlin which was regarded by Giers as evidence of the Ottomans' wish to gain time: "It is evident that great struggle is going on, but I do not think that all is lost. My Russian colleague strongly recommends patience."² He called upon the Foreign Office to avoid rupture with the Porte unless there were military reasons for the contrary. In spite of the preparations against Egypt and the Bedouin incursions, on the 29th he insisted that opposition to the Germans would grow if the Allies continued to do well. Indeed, this was Mallet's swan song.

The Foreign Office was the last to be taken by surprise: "Enver has carried out his intention". Britain was quite ready for war with the Porte. First care was for British subjects in the Ottoman Empire and their safety; the time had come for the publication of a statement to the Moslems in the British Empire explaining Britain's motives, for the troops at Bahrein to start for Shatt-el-Arab, and for the Foreign Office to

¹ Trumpener, pp. 54/5. Kurat, pp. 312/3.

² Mallet to Grey, 29.10.14, tel. no. 1087. Same to same, 29.10.14. Pte. and Conf. GP. 80.

complete its Bluebook on the immediate causes of the rupture.¹

Now Mallet, consulting Giers and Bompard asked the Foreign Office for permission in case the raid had been carried out without the "full" authority of the Porte, to tell the latter that they must choose between rupture with the Entente or the dismissal of the German naval and military missions. He also added that if he was to leave he would do so via Dedesagatch.²

Sazonov's reaction demonstrated his anxiety, over Russia's involvement on another front, but he told the British Ambassador that it would at least finally solve the Straits question in her favour. He instructed Giers to ask for his passports, and agreed that Mallet and Bompard should present an ultimatum to the Porte demanding the withdrawal of the German missions. Should they obtain a negative reply, they should also ask for their passports and leave within twenty four hours. Britain expressed her readiness to comply with the Russian decision and instructed Mallet accordingly of the "utmost surprise" as to the attack made on Russia. She did not fail to mention the "provocative" acts of the Ottoman sponsored Bedouins into Sinai.³ In the Foreign Office's announcement to the Press made on the 31st in which the British Government made the first apologia in defence of her policy since the beginning of the European war it stated:

1 Consul-General Roberts (Odessa) to Grey, 29.10.14, tel. no. 76. Minute by Clerk.

2 Mallet to Grey, 29.10.14, tel. no. 1089, conf. Same to same, 30.10.14, tel. no. 1094.

3 Buchanan to Grey, 29.10.14, tel. no. 571. Same to same, 30.10.14, tel. no. 576. Grey to Buchanan, 29.10.14, tel. no. 938. Grey to Mallet, 30.10.14, tel. no. 727. Bertie to Grey, 30.10.14, tel. no. 437. Nevertheless, on the 29th Grey stated that "Unless Grand Vizier is strong enough to arrest and punish those responsible for this outrage

It was well-known that the Turkish Minister of War was decidedly pro-German in his sympathies, but it was confidentially hoped that the saner counsels of his Colleagues, who had experience of the friendship which Great Britain has always shown towards the Turkish Government, would have prevailed and prevented that Government from entering upon the very risky policy of taking part in the conflict on the side of Germany. 1

As late as 31 October Mallet still had a slight hope that the situation could be saved: "I am, however, unwilling to leave if there is slightest chance of change in the situation during next twenty four hours." This time he relied upon the stormy meeting of the Ottoman Grand Council of the 30th which Djavid informed Bompard had decided against war but was unable to carry out its decision. However, he added "very confidentially", that Morgenthau had informed him that there was no chance of favourable solution. Even in his last meeting with the Grand Vizier, on the 31st, Mallet, though he "gravely" doubted whether Said Halim could prevent war at this stage, was sure that the latter was sincere. This, and the opposition of Djavid and "large" majority of the Cabinet served as enough justification for Mallet to delude himself that at this late hour something could be done and he tried to persuade the Foreign Office accordingly:

I venture to think that HMG might let it be understood that they consider the activity in Syria and the attack on Russian ports as a German plot,* of complicity in which they do not accuse the majority of the Turkish Government. It might be said that unless we are attacked in Egypt or elsewhere we will not make war on Turkey although relations must cease until German influence is broken.

and to make immediate reparation to Russia I do not see how war can be avoided, but we shall not take the first step." Grey to Mallet, 25.10.14, Pte. tel. GP, 80.

1 The Foreign Office announcement to the Press, 31.10.14. ibid./65795.

* Rgis was in fact the contention of the peace party, as Crawford had been told by the Ministers Boustani and Mahmud Pasha. Crawford to Tyrrell, 26.11.14. op. cit.

The Foreign Office, however, made it clear that this was not a matter between the Porte and Britain but between the Porte and the Entente. Contrary to Mallet, Nicolson stated that no attention should be paid to Said Halim's "friendly say". "They are," he added, "words in the air." By this time HMS "Savage" had bombarded Akaba and the fact that a British steamer had been sunk by the Ottomans at Novorossisk also served as proof that Mallet's hopes were ill-founded.¹

On November 1 Mallet left for Athens and a few days later Tewfik left London. On Tewfik's pro-Entente views, Grey commented:

If Tewfik had had control of Turkish policy there would be no war with Turkey now, any more than there would have been with Germany and Austria if Lichnowsky and Mensdorff had had control.

But Tewfik was poorly regarded by the Young Turks, as was Rifaat in Paris, and during most of October he obtained no replies to his numerous letters in which he had urged the Porte to abandon its policy, which as he had told Nicolson must inevitably end in disaster for the country."² The Porte, however, was engaged in blaming Britain and Russia for provoking the rupture of relations. This was of course "absurd" in view of the testimony of Dr. Shirley, an American physician who served on the "Goeben" and testified "beyond a doubt" to Ryan that the German-Ottoman attack was "premeditated and unprovoked".³

1 Mallet to Grey, 31.10.14, tel. no. 1097. Minute, 2.11. General Maxwell to Kitchener, 2.11.14, no. 233E. Buchanan to Grey, 31.10.14, tel. no. 584.

2 Mallet to Grey, 4.11.14, tel. ibid./67911. Grey to Buchanan, 4.11.14, tel. no. 349. Minute by Grey, 5.11.14. Minute by Nicolson, 31.10.14. ibid./65802. R. Grey (Cairo) to Clerk, 14.12.14. Note on Turkish Diplomacy and the rupture between Turkey and the Allied Powers by P.P. Graves, 12.12.14. ibid./87312.

3 Grey to Bertie, 3.11.14. no. 649. tel. communicated by Benckendorff 2.11.14. ibid./66389. Mallet to Grey, 12.11.14. conf. Encl. Memo by Ryan, 8.11.14. very conf.

Though Britain had meanwhile been "compelled" to take action in Akaba in view of the Porte's preparations against Egypt, she decided not to declare a protectorate over Egypt before the actual beginning of hostilities as a precaution in view of the internal situation there. On the 3rd the Foreign Office promised France a formal recognition to the French protectorate in Morocco, when and if Britain declared her own protectorate over Egypt.¹

These were the antecedents which led to the proclamation of war by Britain on the Ottoman Empire on 5 November. Shortly afterwards Mallet sent Grey a despatch which "summarised" the events leading to the rupture of relations between the two countries. In this apologia, Mallet put all the blame on the shoulders of the Young Turks and the Germans. He did not however forget the "peace party" which together with the notorious Ottoman habit for procrastination had helped to delay the war. Nevertheless, he still accused Said Halim, unjustly, for failing to see the German danger or to admit that he could not control events not only on the fateful day of the 29th October but all along: "On this, as on every occasion of my interviews with the Grand Vizier, I was impressed with his inability to realise the facts or to disabuse himself of the conviction, in spite of his many unfortunate experiences, that he would be able, in a really serious crisis, to exact his authority with effect." Whilst he now exposed the inability of Said Halim to exert any influence on the Ottoman Cabinet, at that time he seems to have been hardly aware of this inability. The records clearly demonstrate this. Said Halim however was, naturally, an easy scapegoat especially in wartime when anti-Young Turk feeling in Britain was high. Thus Mallet could claim without foundation that "The crisis which I had predicted to his Highness [Said Halim] at almost every interview which I had with him since my return had actually occurred . . ."

1 Grey to Bertie, 3.11.14, tel. no. 863. Same to same, 3.11.14. tel. no. 864.

Nevertheless: "However slender the chances in our favour, it was obviously my duty, in conjunction with my French and Russian colleagues, to support and encourage by all possible means those forces which were obscurely striving for the preservation of peace." Obscure as the peace party's efforts might have been Mallet still had hope that it might grow stronger and succeed until the very last day. It is indeed remarkable and significant that the Foreign Office backed his policy. Not only did they hail the "marked ability, patience, and discretion" demonstrated by Mallet in carrying out Britain's policy, but also emphasized that he had "rightly directed all his efforts to encourage those influences at Constantinople that were moderate and reasonable. To your efforts it was at any rate in some degree due that the inevitable catastrophe did not occur sooner."¹

As late as 24 August 1917 Mallet was publicly attacked in a leader in The Times. The article claimed that it seemed that Mallet had returned to Constantinople on 16 August from England "with general instructions to work with the Turkish 'Moderates', though the Turkish Government as we now know, was already committed against us. But his messages after his return, so far from correcting only confirmed the Foreign Office view".² Needless to say this enraged Mallet as had been shown in his second apologia. He hotly denied that he misled the Foreign Office, because of his ignorance of the treaty. He claimed that he knew of its existence: "the 'Goeben' and 'Breslau' passed close to my windows at Therapia every other day, the crews stripped to the waist, and all guns ready for action!" He maintained moreover that he had reported that Enver was the master of

1 Mallet to Grey, 20.11.14. Grey to Mallet, 4.12.14. Cd. 7716. It is significant that Mallet did not mention Beaumont, the Counsellor, amongst the staff to whom he paid tribute in his last letter.

2 The Times, 24.8.17, p. 7.

the situation and committed to Germany, that the military preparations were on and also on the "rapid decrease" of Britain's influence. He did not deny that he had hopes until the end but this was only in order to postpone hostilities. He claimed that he personally had been cleared by Grey, who had commended him for his "splendid rearguard action", but hinted that the blame should be laid at the door of those who had failed to prevent the escape of the German ships into the Dardanelles. The operation to force the Dardanelles had been dismissed not because of his reports but, as Kitchener told him, after the events, because it was important "at all costs" to avoid war in the Near East. Here Mallet indicated that the policy of postponing the war had not been initiated by the Foreign Office but was, quite surprisingly, his own: "I was glad to hear all this, [Kitchener's appreciation of his patience] for my own view, which I had formed independently of any instructions, was that it was at all costs vital* to defer, at almost any risk, the commencement of hostilities with Turkey." He congratulated himself on the adoption of this policy in view of the military defeat in Belgium and the risks for India and Egypt. Only a "madman" could contemplate war in such circumstances. Hence he was positive that his policy was "the lesser of two evils." But he still had to defend his daily interviews with Said Halim: "I am not infallible, but I should be surprised if I were not right in stating that it was not I who was taken in by the Grand Vizier, but the Grand Vizier who was taken in by Talaat and Enver." Events had shown that the reverse was true. Said Halim signed the treaty with Germany and was taken in only in the question of Souchon attack on Russia.

* Mallet's italics.

What really happened was that Mallet knew about the struggle between the moderates and the interventionists from Giers, who had obtained the cypher telegrams of the Austrian Ambassador by bribing the Ottoman Post Office. To this he added his own knowledge and that of Sir Edwin Pears of the "Turkish character" by which he meant their love for intrigue, procrastination and their "volatile and unreliable" nature including "their almost regular habit of evading at the eleventh hour, on entirely inadequate pretexts, the performance of their most solemn engagements." On these kinds of consideration and few Austrian telegrams Mallet based his "independent" policy. He founded his policy also on what he called "elements of hope" of a kind which he was not ashamed to divulge:

Supposing Enver had been murdered (for this omission I have never forgiven de Giers) - supposing the German retreat at the Marne had gone a little further - supposing Russia had done a little more - supposing Roumania had "come in" - and one was hoping feverishly all those anxious, humiliating weeks that something of this kind would happen - how differently the future might have shaped itself.

He further claimed that if India remained calm it was by this delay that Britain was able to prove to the Moslems that she had done everything to prevent it. This Mallet could only claim but was unable to prove.¹

As one writer recently commented, considering the "immense" issues at stake (he included free passage through the Straits and German military dominance in Ottoman Asia) the autumn of 1914 "ought" to have witnessed an intense campaign between Britain and Germany for the soul of the Ottoman Empire. Stratford Canning, he claimed, would have fought "like a dragon, and in all probability with success" since in Constantinople a diplomat of "bold temperament", like Enver, could have determined the course of

1 Mallet's apology, 27.8.17. op. cit. Lord Robert Cecil commented that it was a "powerful" defence.

* Mallet's italics.

events. But certain as he is that Stratford Canning would have defeated the pro-German party, he doubts if the British diplomats in 1914 would have been allowed to make the attempt. It does not seem that Kitchener would have been successful either, as another writer thought. As has been seen Mallet was allowed to try, as were the other Entente Ambassadors, while the Government in London supported the attempt despite its despair, but without avail. After 19 August 1914 this meant in fact the expulsion of the German naval crews as well as Liman's mission. Since this could not be done in view of Enver's complete grip on the situation one cannot see how any Ambassador, no matter how bold, would have been able to launch a coup d'état behind the scenes. Politically this was impossible in view of the Ottoman apprehension of Russia and the inability, or unwillingness, of Britain and France to make any territorial concessions. The only solution was in fact the military one of forcing the Dardanelles. Mallet was not against this course, but even had he suggested it there was no sign that the Government in London would have accepted it.¹ Given this situation it was left to the Germans and the Young Turks to take the initiative and bring about the inevitable war at the point which most suited them.

1 Cunningham, pp. 71/2. On 20 July 1919, Curzon suggested to Lloyd George that he appoint Mallet as Ambassador to Rome. The P.M. refused on the ground that Mallet had been "a great failure" at Constantinople, that he "was not at all an able man, but a stupid man, that he was wholly unsuited for Rome, where (after Rodd's departure) an Ambassador will be required not only warmly sympathetic to the Italians, but possessing real authority with them and that Mallet could never acquire this position". Curzon admitted that though Mallet was his friend, he was: "unable to say that I regard him as a man of real ability, resolution or power. I think the reverse." Balfour Papers, 217, pp. 231-3. I am indebted to Mr. B.B. Davis for this information.

CONCLUSIONS

The most striking feature of British policy towards the Ottoman Empire in the period from the Young Turk Revolution of July 1908 and the outbreak of the war in November 1914, was the change from a sympathetic attitude to one of hostility. Rather than judge British policy from the inevitable failure explicit in the rupture of diplomatic relations, one should assess it in this period in terms of the pre-August potentialities and the extent which the British could and did exploit these potentialities. One should also avoid concentration on the subsidiary points of the successful negotiations concerning the Persian Gulf and Mesopotamia which had no importance in terms of higher policy after 1912. This applies equally to the appointment of Orme Clerk as Inspector General to the Ottoman Ministry of Justice and the positions occupied at that time by Graves and Crawford in the other Ministries. These functions clearly carried with them no political influence whatsoever. Again, the importance of the goodwill visit of the C.-in-C. Mediterranean on the very eve of the European War should be disregarded.¹ The actual difference between Britain and the Porte had not been solved by the time of the outbreak of the European War. The failure of the Porte to achieve the friendship of the Entente Powers arose from causes typical and symptomatic of the relations that had continuously existed before the war.

The fundamental fact of British policy towards the Ottoman Empire, and indeed towards any other country during this period, was its complete

1 Ahmad, "Great Britain's Relations with the Young Turks. . ." op. cit., p. 324.

subordination to two major considerations: the Entente with France and Russia, and the welfare of the British Empire.

Until the eve of the Young Turk Revolution no major difficulties existed for the makers of British policy. Relations were clearly at their lowest ebb and Britain was not concerned to improve them but rather the conditions of the Christian subjects of the Sultan. The Young Turk Revolution radically change this clear-cut policy. It is not surprising that Gray hailed the Revolution since it saved him, so he thought, from the Macedonian impasse, but he also saw at the beginning the potential danger it brought with it as far as the Entente with Russia and the future of Egypt and India were concerned. The most serious of these potential dangers for Grey was that his friendly policy towards the Young Turks should clash with the Entente with Russia. But the Young Turks proved a disappointment and a failure both internally and externally by 1910, when the Russians had not yet questioned or jeopardised the kind of friendship Britain had developed towards the Young Turks. This failure, coupled with the Porte's claims in questions like Pan Islam, the Gulf and Mesopotamia in fact ended Britain's benevolent attitude towards the Young Turks long before it could clash with the anti-Ottoman policy that Russia demonstrated in early 1912 by encouraging the creation of the Balkan League.

Thus it was the disastrous failure of the Young Turks in their Balkan policy that saved Britain from the greatest dilemma she could have faced. Had the active Slavophil policy of the Russians succeeded before 1910, then Britain would have indeed had to decide whether to support Balkan or Young Turk nationalism. This could indeed have

been an awkward dilemma for her since European and Imperial interests beyond doubt demanded support for Balkan nationalism, whilst her apprehensions on Pan-Islam and her interests in the Gulf, would have pushed her into support of Young Turk rule in Europe, had it been successful.

But the CUP failure was not merely the failure of the Young Turks to materialize their Revolution. It involved a much greater disaster than their own for it brought with it the destruction of the Ottoman Empire in Europe at the end of 1912. Its replacement by the Balkan States did not bring peace to Europe. On the contrary, Europe paid the full price for supporting the aspirations of the Balkan States.

Nevertheless one can well argue that Ottoman Asia was still a viable state since, after all, the crises which confronted it in 1913 were solved or postponed. But at this time Britain lost her position at the Porte because of her diplomatic support for the Balkan States, as was demonstrated in the questions of Adrianople and the Aegean Islands. Consequently, as a result of the Balkan Wars, Germany could strengthen her position in the Ottoman Empire especially as she found once again a powerful response to her ambitions in the Ottoman army as well as in the CUP.

What was the role of the British Embassy in this continuous deterioration in Britain's relations with the Ottoman Empire? Perhaps the Young Turks were unlucky to have such critical and anti-Revolutionary diplomats like Lowther, Fitzmaurice and Marling in the British Embassy. These men aspired for a British-style constitutional monarchy in the Ottoman Empire, but found themselves in the throes of "Jacobin" - like regime which detested the Entente and permitted an increasing penetration of German military and interests. Perhaps also the Embassy's

apprehensions were well-grounded in view of the consequences.

There was reason indeed for British anxiety but the vehemence and strong anti-CUP tone which was ever present in the Embassy's correspondence with the Foreign Office was bound to influence London. But London had also strongly imbibed these anti-Ottoman prejudices which, enhanced by the CUP's failures, found the FO quite ready to accept the Ottoman setbacks in Tripoli and the Balkans as faits accomplis. For the crucial fact remains that only once in mid-1909 did the Foreign Office warn the Embassy of its anti-CUP attitude. The the rest of the Lowther-Pitzmaurice-Marling period, a period of more than four years, the Foreign Office never again reproached the Embassy for its conspicuous bias. Moreover, the other British diplomatic representatives while reflecting the attitudes of the countries to which they had been accredited re-invigorated the Foreign Office in its too ready acceptance of the views propagated by the Embassy in Constantinople.

During all this time Britain had shown great desire to obtain the Porte's recognition for her exclusive rule in the Persian Gulf. For this they were ready, significantly in mid-July 1912, to give up their ambitions in the Baghdad-Gulf line, a major sacrifice on their part in view of their previous attitude. It ought to be acknowledged that the Foreign Office refused to change its compromising policy towards the Porte in these questions in spite of temptation and pressures to do so from the Embassy, in view of the crushing defeat of the Ottoman Empire in late 1912. The Persian Gulf and Mesopotamia were regarded as of particular importance beyond the problems of the Balkans or the internal rule of the CUP. Here the necessity to secure the north-east flank of India was as ever before of special importance.

This was not the case with Pan-Islam which had a considerable influence on Britain's policy. As far as the Embassy was concerned it was used as an excellent lever to push the Foreign Office. The Pan-Islamic aspirations of the Young Turks, imaginary as they had been in many cases relating to the Moslem subjects of the British Empire, influenced the Foreign Office in two different and contradictory ways. On the one hand it strengthened the Foreign Office's belief in the mischievous and harmful character of the Young Turk regime, on the other hand, following the Viceroy's constant warnings, it acted as a restraint upon the anti-Ottoman attitudes adopted by the British Government. The net result was nonetheless an anti-Ottoman policy.

Never, therefore, were the Ottoman suggestions for an alliance with Britain, even when relations were at their peak in late 1908 a question of practical policy for Britain, and were in fact rejected out of hand. Not even a democratic Ottoman Empire could be an asset to the extremely cautious policy Britain was following before 1914.

It is in the light of the crucial Lowther-Fitzmaurice-Marling period that one should judge the subsequent period dominated by Sir Louis Mallet. Was he instructed to initiate a new and favourable period in the relations with the Young Turks or was he given to understand that while considerations of high policy, as he himself knew very well, could not be altered, he could still try his luck in establishing correct relations with the CUP Government by both reversing the policy of Lowther-Fitzmaurice-Marling and attempting to keep them neutral? So far these questions remain unsolved, but the fact is that Mallet inaugurated a policy which did not go beyond extravagant flatteries to the CUP leadership and continuous attempts to persuade the Foreign Office as to the illusory success of the Young Turks but did not

include any systematic programme to solve the main issues at stake: Ottoman relations with Russia and Greece.

That Mallet's achieved little was quickly demonstrated by the rapid growth of German predominance since, and as a result of the catastrophe in the Balkans. Significantly Mallet failed, or perhaps did not even try to court Enver as much as he did Talaat and Jemal. Is it surprising to find that Mallet was faced with the complete bankruptcy of his policy on his return from London on 16th August 1914?¹

If Mallet was ruthlessly criticised for his blunders in the August-October period this was mainly because The Times as everyone else outside the Foreign Office did not know that the blunders he had committed before were in fact much greater. His attempt before July 1914 to build up a new image of the CUP leadership was, indeed, groundless and misleading in view of their record. He started to fight the Germans and their protege too late, although it should be acknowledged that no other Ambassador could have achieved more after August 1914.

Britain's failure in 1914 was more a result of Britain's Entente with Russia than of blunders committed by Lowther, Fitzmaurice or Mallet. Besides the Entente Powers could not be expected to offer the Young Turks what the German Powers offered them at all times. Strong prejudices just as unjustified admiration need not be given too much weight.

It is quite clear therefore that Britain could not launch any diplomatic coup and inaugurate a pro-Ottoman policy in any of the periods under discussion. If such might have existed it was that of 1908-1909 when the CUP had not yet shown its true face, and when it was easy to condemn the Austrian annexation of

1 Z. Steiner's assertion that "a study of the Eastern question will show, I think, the importance of Mallet's contribution", cannot be sustained. See her study The F.O. and Foreign Policy, 1898-1914 (Cambridge, 1969), p. 106.

Bosnia and Herzegovina and the declaration of Bulgarian independence. But these questions were easily patched up. What really mattered was the subsequent failure of the CUP to govern their Christian citizens which was not their fault alone in view of the unchecked growth of Balkan nationalism. Their aggressive Pan-Islamism also counted considerably against the Young Turks. Their failure to establish constitutional rule, as much as it shocked and disappointed the British Government, was not an index for Britain's policy towards the Young Turks, as the apathetic attitude towards Kiamil's and Ghazi Moukhtar's Governments proved beyond doubt.¹ The Balkan States had never agreed to a Young Turk type of Constitutional rule. If Austria decided so quickly to avoid any confrontation with any CUP claim for Bosnia, is it surprising that the nationalist-minded Balkan States, as they indeed proved from the very beginning, would never have tolerated successful CUP rule ?

This is not said in order to clear Britain of all responsibility. She did definitely share as full responsibility as the other Powers in the destruction of the Ottoman Empire. Although she was ready to assist in its reform, she subordinated her reform policy to her much more important international and Imperial considerations.² Her main preoccupation was her friendship with Russia rather than her desire to win over the Young Turks, and she could hardly be blamed for this choice. Hardly too could anyone accuse the British of being responsible for the closure of the Dardanelles following the Porte's joining Germany in the war which was probably a factor in the breakdown of the Czarist regime. Was not Russia herself by her

1 Temperley, "British Policy towards Parliamentary Rule. . ." op. cit.

2 M.S. Anderson, The Eastern Question, 1774-1923 (London, 1966) pp. 397/8.

anti-Ottoman policy more responsible for the closure of the Dardanelles more than any other Power ?

The Young Turks, without underating their own "contribution" to the destruction of the Ottoman Empire, were a pawn in the cruel diplomatic game. In a no less harmful way, British policy towards the Ottoman Empire was also itself a pawn in the game of more reckless governments than Britain, like Russia and Germany and to a lesser extent Austria and Italy. Was not Grey willing time and again to give a chance to the Young Turks to stay out of the European groupings until 1914 ? He no doubt did that, but was he himself, or were his deputies, prepared to change their own policy to make these chances possible ? Never, indeed because he had ample reasons to refuse to do this at every stage since the inauguration of the July 1908 Revolution on both international and Imperial grounds. Thus Britain's pretensions as the chief promoter of constitutional rule and good government were never part of her realpolitik especially when they threatened to collide with more substantial issues. The same judgment applies to Britain's desire to reform the Ottoman Empire. What Grey, Nicolson or Hardinge could be accused of is not their decision to give overriding importance to the Entente or Britain's interests in India or Egypt or before late 1912 the Gulf and Mesopotamia, but for their moral claim to stand for constitutionalism and reform, while in reality they stood for Britain's self-interest in the European Concert, their Empire and in a lesser degree for Britain's trade and economy.

As to the Ottomans, whether Young Turks or their opponents, they were never ready to be satisfied with anything short of alliance. Their main mistake, not yet admitted by Turkish historians,¹ was their belief in the

1 Kurat, op. cit., p. 292.

necessity of joining one European alliance or another. Consequently they ruled out, mainly from fear of Russia, the safer course of staying neutral. Enver and his pro-German faction were clearly responsible for this rather than the Entente Powers who, indeed, did not conceal their support for the Porte's enemies. The failure of the Embassy to discover the existence of the Ottoman-German Treaty did not really influence the issue of the Porte's entry to the war. This decision was entirely in the hands of the Ottoman rulers in 1914. They could afford to stay neutral but their vanity, pro-Germanism and their dreams of recovering their lost territories brought about their decision to join Germany. The Entente had only vague plans as to the future of the Asiatic provinces of the Porte and, including Russia, they were ready to leave them intact in the Young Turks' hands. But the latter instead preferred to share their fate with those whom they thought were the stronger. This was not a gamble, as some historians have claimed but a cool decision. The CUP claim in 1908 of attachment to England because of the so-called affinity of constitutional goals rapidly faded away and only interests and old prejudices counted for most of the period. Germany with no Moslem subjects and with no constitutional pretensions was the ideal ally, so the Young Turks thought. Britain with both Moslem subjects and constitutional pretensions could be only an enemy to the CUP, such was the belief of Enver and his friends. It was perhaps the fact that the Young Turk rulers were soldiers rather than statesmen which led them to the abyss, and for this Britain could claim no responsibility.

APPENDIX I

Gooch & Temperley's 'British Documents on the Origins of the War'
and the Ottoman Empire

When Austen Chamberlain, the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, in late 1924 confirmed the decision of his predecessor to publish a selection from the British archives dealing with the origins of the First World War, he referred to "impartiality and accuracy" as, to quote Gooch and Temperley themselves, "being the necessary qualifications for any work which the Editors were to publish."¹ Gooch and Temperley never questioned their own qualifications to impartiality, and indeed they are much superior in this respect to the German Editors of 'Die Grosse Politik'. The opening of the British archives, however, enables us to have a fresh look at their interpretation of the origins of the First World War with regard to the Ottoman Empire.

No one can question their decision to start in 1898, as much as this point is arguable since they could have started from 1870/1 like the Germans and the French. They later discovered that the Government wished the Documents to start from the Entente with France in 1904, but they found it necessary to begin with two introductory volumes.² The first and the second volumes had for their subject for (I) The End of Isolation, and (II) The Anglo-Japanese Alliance and the Franco-British Entente.

Since the original intention was to discover the antecedents of the Entente Cordiale it is hardly surprising that the Ottoman Empire was given no more than a few pages in these two volumes. But even these few pages gave a foretaste of the kind of treatment the editors intended to give the Ottoman Empire in the subsequent volumes. In the first volume the reader

¹Forward to Vol. XI, repeated in the Forward of each volume.

²G.P. Gooch, "Harold Temperley, 1879-1939". Proceedings of the British Academy, vol. XXV, (1940), p.11.

is informed of what the editors called the Anglo-Russian "understanding" (i.e. partition) with regard to the Ottoman Empire in 1898 (p.8); then comes a small sub-chapter on ^{the} Powers and the Balkans in the years 1898-1903 (pp. 295-305). Whilst the discussion of Anglo-French relations perhaps made a mention of the question of Muscat in 1899 necessary, (pp. 209-214), none was made of Britain's policy towards the Porte on the question of Koweit in this period. The reader might have perhaps expected this question to be dealt with in the context of the Baghdad Railway which was first dealt with in the second volume. The editors, however, announced their intention to deal with the Baghdad Railway Question within the context of 'Anglo-German Relations' (title to chapter XII, Section III: The Baghdad Railway (1903) pp. 174-96). Thus the question of Koweit was evaded until that phase when serious negotiations had begun between Britain and the Young Turks. Similarly, one is hardly surprised therefore that in volume IV the Straits question was dealt with as part of the Anglo-Russian Rapprochement, 1903-7 (pp. 41-59).

The above are only perhaps minor points, although they demonstrate the kind of policy the editors had in mind. Volume V is, however, more revealing. The title of this volume alone explains much: 'The Near East, The Macedonian Problem and the Annexation of Bosnia, 1903-9'. Here, again, the editors did not try to conceal their policy. Moreover, they even explained their political beliefs in the Forward, if not with that passion usually associated with nationalist historians, then at least with a kind of conviction which requires no further explanation: "The insurrections in Macedonia, and the inability of the Turkish Sultan to reform his administration, compelled the Great Powers to intervene, and produced interesting experiments in international government. The chief difficulty of reform consisted in the peculiar system known as the Ottoman Empire, and in its inability or reluctance to adopt Western ideas or to accept the demands of the great Western Powers." An interpretation of events in the Near East from 1903-9 with no mention, or even a hint of, the responsibility of the Balkan States, or with an assessment of the policy of the Powers merely as

"interesting experiments in international government", can hardly be regarded as a fair one. There is an attempt, moreover, to explain the policy of the Powers towards the Porte merely in terms of the "adoption" of Western ideas or, the "acceptance" of the demands of the Powers without any questioning as to the appropriateness of these ideas and demands in relation to the actual conditions within the Ottoman Empire. Merely to present Abdul Hamid as the sole villain is hardly acceptable at a time when the archives are able to give us a more accurate picture of the period and when recent research has indicated that this Sultan was far from being the reform-hater that he has been described all too often by contemporaries and historians.¹

As Abdul Hamid was much discredited with the editors, one would have expected them at least to show more fairness towards his enemies the Young Turks. If the editors did not explicitly state their attitude towards the Young Turks, as they had in the case of Abdul Hamid, their treatment could again hardly be described as impartial. It was, however, due to the Young Turk Revolution that the editors found it necessary to include material on 'The Turkish Empire on the Eve of its Fall' (Ch. XXX). For they had "appropriately" decided to initiate a "very full" study of "that unique machine of government, the Ottoman Empire, in the period just preceding its collapse". Their implication was that the Young Turk Revolution had brought about the "Fall" or "collapse" of the Ottoman Empire in 1908. Even if a "collapse" could be proved the "very full" study they felt necessary could hardly be based upon the Annual Reports of the British Embassy in Constantinople for 1906-7 significant as these might have been. In any case, these Annual Reports had been included in order to prove the Sultan's "inability" or "reluctance" to reform his Empire. By "reform" the editors understood, as they explained in the next sentence, the adoption of Western

¹B. Lewis, op.cit. passim. C.P. Gooch repeatedly calls Abdul Hamid "the Great Assassin". History of Our Times, 1885-1911 (London, n.d.), p. 92; and in the second edition of this book published in 1946. Gooch's claim that Temperley was "fair to the Turks", despite his Serbophilism, is unacceptable. See Temperley's article in Cambridge Historical Journal (1933), op.cit. Gooch, "Harold Temperley". op.cit.

ideas. Since for the editors, as well for the Foreign Office, the question of "reform" was obvious they never took the trouble and ask themselves whether Western ideas were suitable for the Ottoman Empire.¹ Thus we find Temperley in 1933 at pains to prove Britain's consistent efforts to see parliamentary rule and constitutionalism established in the Ottoman Empire. He concludes by saying that Grey's private letters relating to the period July 1908 - April 1909 proved that he "earnestly supported a parliamentary regime in Turkey as long as he could. What is more remarkable is that a reference to history shows him to have been almost the only British Minister who ever did so."² By coming to this hasty conclusion Temperley overlooked the fact that Grey would have never supported the cause of constitutionalism in the Ottoman Empire if the Young Turks had not launched their revolution. The Foreign Office's correspondence proves beyond doubt that Grey's support was not only conditioned by the success of the Young Turks but was motivated by Realpolitik. Since all attempts for reform in Macedonia had failed, the Young Turks bid for self-reform could only be welcomed by Grey and his deputies.

Gooch went even further. In 1938 he wrote: "Grey had done his utmost to reform the old Turkey and to encourage the new, but his efforts were in vain. In Macedonia as in the Congo he laboured not for selfish interests, but in the cause of humanity. In Africa his patient endeavours succeeded: in the Balkans they failed. But nobody can argue that failure was his fault."³ It is true that Grey regarded his efforts to reform the Ottoman Empire as humanitarian activities, but these were meant to apply to the Christian population. The Moslem population and its welfare had never been given the attention which was given to the Christians. Thus when reports were flooding into the Foreign Office in late 1912 and early

¹E. Kedourie, England and the Middle East, ch. I.

²in: Cambridge Historical Journal, op.cit. p.191.

³G.P. Gooch, Before the War. Studies in Diplomacy, vol. II (London, 1938) p.

1913 reporting on the massacres of Moslems by Christians as a result of the Ottoman defeats, it was indeed admitted in the Foreign Office that they resembled and exceeded the massacres by Moslems. It is no wonder, therefore, that the editors avoided the question of Christian brutalities.¹ Grey should not perhaps be singled out for accusation for not following the humanitarian policy attributed to him by historians, since no foreign secretary could ever claim that his policy was not one of Realpolitik. Even if one accepts the 'humanitarian Grey', it was humanitarianism extended only to the Christian population and only in Macedonia but not to Armenia. Gooch and Temperley, however, had their own reasons for not wishing to doubt Grey's humanitarian motives. Before the First World War Gooch had never tried to conceal his strong sympathies with the Christian cause in the Balkans, and was indeed a member of the Balkan Committee. But he qualified his Turcophobia: "I was anti-Turk only in the sense that I knew the Turks to be unfit to rule over Christians."² As far as Abdul Hamid was concerned such reservations made little difference since this question was also the touchstone for relations of the Great Powers with the Porte. But as far as the Young Turks were concerned Gooch's assertion revealed the erroneous policy and the naivety of the Balkan Committee. This Committee, whose members had claimed, as did Gooch, to be "well versed"³ in Balkan politics, proved to be entirely mistaken as far as the prospects of the Young Turk Revolution were concerned. Their position was markedly different from that of the Foreign Office. This marked difference of attitude between the Foreign Office and the Balkan Committee is not touched upon in the volumes under discussion. Recently discovered archival material, however, suggest that the Foreign Office never treated the Balkan Committee

¹See : FO/371/1521/49164. Even Miss Durham admitted the extent of Allies brutalities against Moslems. e.g. Durham to Cromer, in: Cromer to Tyrrell, 10.3.13. FO/371/1782. The question has been raised time and again in Parliament. *ibid.* For more material on Christian atrocities: FO/371/1839; FO/371/1840.

²G.P. Gooch, Under Six Reigns, p.131.

³*ibid.*

seriously. They were moreover regarded repeatedly as nuisances and troublemakers. Their information lagged behind that of the Foreign Office in the most crucial matter namely the Young Turks' failure to rule the Christians in Macedonia. On this Gooch and Temperley remained silent. Instead they reproduced no less than 6 documents, the Foreign Office's and Cartwright's defences in response to Aehrenthal's accusations of Buxton's activities in Serbia in late 1908.¹ We are again told of Aehrenthal's worries as to the Balkan Committee's activities, this time in Albania and Macedonia, in early 1911. Aehrenthal clearly attributed more power than it really possessed to the Balkan Committee since he was afraid that it might start agitation and influence the Foreign Office to launch an anti-CUP policy. Since this is the only document published by the editors about the Balkan Committee in this period one gets the impression that the Balkan Committee did indeed have considerable influence with the Foreign Office. The minutes of the Foreign Office only establish the facts that the Committee rather than initiating agitation against the CUP Government was supporting it and Nicolson concluded that a warning to Buxton was unnecessary.²

Gooch, however, is not very disturbed when he comes to discuss these changes of attitude. He tries to impress the reader of his memoirs that there was no difference between the Foreign Office and the Balkan Committee in their changing attitudes towards the Porte. Whilst the archives are quite clear as to the kind of view the Foreign Office had of the Balkan Committee, Gooch kept quiet about it both in the British Documents and his memoirs. "None of us", he wrote in 1958, "could foresee that within a year or two the Young Turks would pursue an even more

¹Vol. V. nos. 489, 490, 480, 505, 516, 533.

²Vol. IX.1. no. 213. Buxton is mentioned again by the editors in vol. IX, ii. no. 1053 with regard to the question of the Powers' mediation between the Balkan Allies in June 1913.

ruthless policy of Ottomanization than Abdul Hamid...."¹ Is it surprising, therefore, that the Balkan Committee as a body and such people as Noel Buxton, Lord Bryce, J.D. Bouchier and G.P. Gooch himself, had been endowed by historians with importance and influence on the Foreign Office which in reality they did not possess? Of all these "dissenters" only Miss Durham merits such a reputation.² The rest proved to be far less informed and somewhat naive as regards the Young Turks' statesmanship, and were by no means clever watchdogs of the Foreign Office's policy towards the Ottoman Empire. Nothing is further from the truth than to say that the Foreign Office could not ignore them. Yet their biographers not only claimed that they influenced the Foreign Office, but also managed to convince historians that their interpretation of the Near Eastern events was the right one. After Gooch's claim that Grey was motivated by humanitarianism and not by selfish interests it is hardly surprising to read in Trevelyan's biography: "Grey like his predecessors, had again and again warned Europe of the consequences of leaving that wound [Macedonia] to fester. Now the inevitable had happened; the Balkan States made war to accomplish for themselves the task that the Great Powers had refused to perform by more pacific methods in the general interest.... Grey was blameless in the matter: [the appearance of the Balkan States as a military power] he had not either directly or indirectly instigated the Balkan Alliance."³

It is worthwhile, however, to have another look at the Weltanschauung of the editors themselves since they, in their method of selection have led a whole generation of historians into believing that Balkan nationalism was right while the Ottoman Empire, whether ruled by Young or Old, were wrong. Temperley certainly believed in it, although in his Inaugural

¹Under Six Reigns, p. 134.

²A.J.P. Taylor, The Trouble Makers, (London, 1957), p. 97. E.C. Thaden, Russia and the Balkan Alliance, p. 119. This author relies here on the uncritical biographies of Noel Buxton and Bouchier by Conwell-Evans, Rosa Anderson and Lady Grogan. *ibid.* p. 165, n. 56. See also: The History of the Times, vol. III: 1884-1912 (London, 1947) pp. 730-33. vol. IV. Part I: 1912-20, (London, 1952) p. 75 ff.

³G.M. Trevelyan, Grey of Fallodon (London, 1937) pp. 231-2.

Lecture given at Cambridge in late 1930 (where he referred to the British Documents as a "very small" selection) he said: "....such selections convey a great deal of meaning to the selectors, and even a certain meaning to highly trained historians. But they can hardly convey any meaning at all to the apprentice in research."¹ He himself had already announced which side he supported when he published his History of Serbia in 1917 and later in his lecture on "The Bulgarian and Other Atrocities, 1875-8 in the Light of Historical Criticism".²

But it is really Gooch to whom our attention should be turned as he far more than his colleagues combined historical research and political activities. He did not see the danger of any conflict arising between the two roles. On the contrary: "As an original member of the Balkan Committee I was well versed in Balkan politics, and my historical studies provided the necessary perspective."³ This combination inevitably proved to be harmful as any political cause is bound to be if combined with historical research. Gooch was hardly an exception to the obvious contradiction between political commitment and the desire for "impartiality and accuracy". Gooch declared in his Merttens Lecture in 1935 entitled 'Politics and Morals': "In every community there are men and women ready to suffer exile or imprisonment, torture and death for their principles; and they are the salt of the earth. With states it is different. The private citizen may prefer to surrender his life rather than his faith, like the brave Armenians confronted with the alternative of apostasy or instant death. A state cannot and must not make such sacrifice, for it is the trustee of the generations to come. If brutality summoned to surrender its territory, alter its institutions, or diminish its independence, its

¹ H. Temperley, Research and Modern History. An Inaugural Lecture given at Cambridge, 19.11.30. (London, 1930) p.11.

² in: Proceedings of the British Academy, vol. XVII (London, 1931) pp. 3-28.

³ Under Six Reigns, p. 131.

duty, so most people believe, is to resist. By refusing to open the frontiers to the German armies in 1914, the Belgian Government kept alive the soul of the nation and challenged the degrading doctrine that material force is supreme.... just as I cannot condemn resistance to flagrant aggression, I cannot denounce the successive revolts of the Christian communities of the Near East against the intolerable yoke of the Turkish invader, which had stunted their life for centuries as the growth of a tree is thwarted by an iron clasp."¹ This was perhaps true as far as Gooch's belief in 1935 went. Between 1908 and 1911 he and his friends in the Balkan Committee had held different views. The 'salt of the earth' of that particular period were not the Christian communities of the Ottoman Empire but the Young Turks, whom the Balkan Committee were prepared to regard not as invaders but as liberators. Disappointingly, Gooch's principles of politics and morals did not seem to apply in cases of no less 'flagrant aggression' than the German attack on Belgium in 1914, namely the Italian aggression in Tripoli in 1911 or the Balkan aggression in 1912. Moreover, it is significant that Gooch was prepared to give his consent to the kind of state Mustafa Kemal had created. It was not democracy or constitutionalism that Gooch then regarded as an index for good or bad government, but rather its success or failure in ruling the country: "....nobody denies to Mustafa Kemal the title of a great man. The Young Turks gambled on a victory of the Central Powers and their failure left the stage clear for a new chief.... Wisely recognising that the Turkish Empire had perished, he determined to erect a homogeneous, modernized, secularized republic in the home of his race. The dynasty and the caliphate are gone, polygamy is abolished, the Swiss code has replaced the sacred law of Islam. The fez, the veil, and the Turkish alphabet are swept away by the new broom. Not even Hitler himself has made such a

¹G.P. Gooch, Politics and Morals. Merttens Lecture, 1935 (London, 1935), pp. 22-3.

radical breach with the daily life and the historic traditions of a nation."¹

Here, it seems, we are at last supplied with the explanation for the editors attitude towards the Young Turks in particular and the Ottoman Empire in general. Their failure condemned them to extinction even so far as historical research is concerned. This is probably the reason why the Ottoman Empire was not treated "very fully", as the editors explained, after the events of 1908-9. As for the subsequent years the Ottoman Empire was made by the editors a subsidiary subject which should be dealt only as part of what they saw as more important subjects like the Baghdad Railway which had been regarded by the editors as part of Anglo-Ottoman relations and which had but little bearing on Anglo-Ottoman relations. Thus in volume VI, which deals with the Anglo-German Tension, a large chapter (XLVI, pp. 325-433) discusses the question of the Baghdad Railway between 1905 and 1910, and a considerable part of volume X (Part II, pp. 1-420) continues to describe the development of this question between 1910 and 1914. From the material now available in the archives it is clear that the Foreign Office regarded primarily as part and parcel of Anglo-Ottoman relations no less than any other aspect of these relations and of no crucial importance. Moreover, as has been only recently realized, the editors had clearly exaggerated its importance. If any place was given to the Ottoman Empire after 1909 it was only in connection with international crises such as the Balkan Wars or the Liman von Sanders question.

Finally the most astonishing part of the British Documents is Appendix III in volume X (Part II), which discusses the question of 'Lord Kitchener and the Arab National Movement'. The title is misleading since the Appendix discusses five different subjects all trying to demonstrate that Britain was sympathetic to the 'Arab National Movement'.

¹G.P. Gooch, Dictatorship in Theory and Practice. Conway Memorial Lecture, 13.3.35. (London, 1935), p. 9.

²M.S. Anderson, The Eastern Question, p.267.

But since so far as Britain was concerned no such movement existed at the time, it was necessary, for a reason yet unknown, to call upon George Antonius, who was at that time engaged in preparing his nationalistic version of that question, to help in the preparation of this Appendix. The editors admitted only that he supplied them with Abdullah's account of his conversations with Lord Kitchener, but probably Antonius persuaded the editors to include also the rest of his version in the Appendix. Thus we also find, apart from Kitchener's and Abdullah's versions of their conversations in 1914, a discussion of the 'Origins of the Arab National Movement', 'Arab Secret Societies', the 'Arab-Syrian Congress in Paris, June 1913', and 'Aziz Ali and the Arab Movement, 1914'. All these had nothing to do with the original title of the Appendix; 'Lord Kitchener and the Arab National Movement'. So, it is clear that they could serve only one aim: that of Antonius' version of the 'Arab Awakening', which in itself has already been proved to be of doubtful source for the historian.¹ Whilst none of the sections had any bearing whatsoever on British policy, the editors tried to give the impression that Britain was sympathetic to the Arab-Syrian Congress held in Paris in 1913 and in the case of Aziz Ali in 1914. This, however could be done only by omitting certain minutes and private correspondence which would have clearly shown that the British Government was, indeed, far from sympathising or encouraging any separatist movement including that of the Arabs. The Congress was never treated seriously in the Foreign Office, and the Young Turks managed to reach an agreement with the Young Arabs. Moreover, the case of Aziz Ali was regarded by both Whitehall and the Embassy as a humanitarian one which had no bearing on the policy towards the Porte. The Times and subsequently Antonius himself were at pains to show that it

¹S.G. Haim, "'The Arab Awakening' - A Source for the Historian?" Die Welt des Islams (1953), pp. 237-50.

was a political question with which Britain sympathised.¹ As the archives clearly show Britain was consistent in maintaining her policy of Ottoman integrity and independence until the entrance of the "Goeben" and the "Breslau" into the Dardanelles on 10 August 1914. Even afterwards, small as was Britain's belief in Ottoman neutrality, doubts were raised only inside the Foreign Office, and no change in this policy was made until the actual rupture of relations in early November.

So, while in 1938 the British Government was preparing its version of the promises which had been made to the Arabs, and to the Zionists, which differed from the one propagated by Antonius and others, he was able to use the opportunity presented to him by the publication of this volume to the detriment of Gooch and Temperley's "impartiality and accuracy".

¹G. Antonius, The Arab Awakening (London, 1938) p. 120. Temperley resented Antonius' failure to cite Appendix III in his discussion of Kitchener's conversation with Abdullah and of the Aziz Ali affair. He dismissed him as ".....a violent pro-Arab". Temperley to Gaselee, 29.12.38, and the Foreign Office's minutes, FO/370/L/66/449 ff.

II. BIOGRAPHICAL APPENDIX

Abdul Hamid II. (1842-1918). Sultan and Caliph of the Ottoman Empire, 1876-1909.

Aehrenthal, Alois, Baron Lexa von (1854-1912) Ambassador at Bucharest, 1896-1899, at St. Petersburg 1899-1906. Austrian Minister for Foreign Affairs, 1906-1912.

Asquith, Herbert Henry, Earl of Oxford and Asquith, (1852-1928). Home Secretary, 1892-5. Chancellor of the Exchequer, 1905-8. Prime Minister, 1908-1916.

Babington-Smith, Sir H. (1863-1923). Private Secretary to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, 1891, to the Viceroy of India, 1894. President and Representative on the Council of the Public Debt, 1900-I. Director of the National Bank of Turkey, 1909-1913. Director of the Bank of England, 1920.

Barclay, Sir George H. (1862-1921). Entered the FO, 1886. Served at Washington, Rome, Madrid and Tokyo. First at Constantinople. 1898, Chargé at the Embassy, 1906-8. Minister April-July 1908. Minister at Tehran, 1908-12, at Bucharest, 1912-18.

Beaumont, H.H.D. (1867-1949). Entered the FO, 1892. Chargé at Cettinje, 1909-10, Councillor at Athens, 1910-14. Councillor at Constantinople, 1914, Chargé July-August 1914. Minister to Venezuela, 1916-23.

Benckendorff, Alexander Count. Russian Ambassador at London, 1903-17.

Berchtold, Leopold Count von (1863-1942). Austrian Ambassador at St. Petersburg, 1906-12. Minister for Foreign Affairs, 1912-15.

Bertie, Francis Leveson, Viscount, (1844-1919). British Ambassador at Rome, 1903-4, at Paris, 1905-18.

Block, Sir Adam S.J. (1856-1941). Student Interpreter, Constantinople, 1877. Vice-Consul and Consul from 1882 at Beirut, Damascus, Constantinople. Chief Dragoman, 1894-1903. President and Representative of British and Dutch Bondholders in the Council of Public Debt., 1903-29. President of the British Chamber of Commerce from 1907.

Bompard, M. (1854-). French Ambassador at St. Petersburg, 1902-7,
at Constantinople, 1909-14.

Buchanan, Sir George N. (1854-1924). Agent, Consul-General and Minister
at Sofia, 1903-8. British Ambassador at St. Petersburg, 1910-18,
at Rome, 1919-21.

Bunsen, Sir Maurice de (1852-1932). First Secretary and Chargé at
Constantinople, 1897-1902. Minister at Lisbon, 1905-6. Ambassador
at Madrid, 1906-13, at Vienna, 1913-14.

Bullard, Sir R.W. (1885-). Student Interpreter at the Levant, 1906.
Acting Vice-Consul, Beirut, 1909, 10. Bitlis, Trebizond, 1911, 1912.
Acting Third Dragoman, 1909. Acting Consul Erzeroum and Basra, 1914.
Civil Adviser to the British Governor at Basra, 1914. Military Governor
at Baghdad, 1920. Minister at Jedda, 1936. Minister and Ambassador
at Tehran, 1939-46.

Buxton, Noel Baron Noel-Buxton (1869-1948). M.P. 1905-6, 1910-18. Founded
the Balkan Committee (with Lord Bryce) in 1903. Minister of
Agriculture, 1924, 1929-30.

Carrasso, Emanuel (-1934). Member of the CUP 'inner circle' at
Salonica. Grand Master of 'Macedonia Risorta' Masonic Lodge.
Deputy for Salonica and Istanbul. Food Controller in World War I.
Left for Italy in 1919.

Cartwright, Sir Fairfax L. (1857-1928). Minister Resident at Munich and
Stuttgart, 1906-8. Ambassador at Vienna, 1908-13.

Cassel, Sir Ernest Joseph (1852-1921). British Financier of German-Jewish
origin. in 1898 financed the dams of Assuan and Assiut, the National
Banks of Egypt, Morocco and Turkey (1909). Negotiated with the
Germans as to the possibility of British participation in the Baghdad
Railway. Personal friend of Edward VII. Disliked by the FO.

Chirol, Sir Valentine (1852-1929). Served in the FO, 1872-6. Director of the
Foreign Department of The Times, 1899-1912. Had personal connections
with the FO and the Indian Government.

- Churchill, Sir Winston S. (1874-1965). President of the Board of Trade, 1908-10. Home Secretary, 1910-11. First Lord of the Admiralty, 1911-15.
- Clerk, Sir George R. (1874-1951). Entered the FO, 1899. Chargé at Addis Ababa, 1906-7. First Secretary at Constantinople, 1910-12. Senior Clerk at the Eastern Department, 1913-14. First British Minister to Prague, 1919-26, at Angora, 1926-33. Ambassador at Paris, 1934-7.
- Constans, J.M. (1833-1913). French Minister of the Interior, Governor-General of Indo-China, Minister at Peking. Ambassador at Constantinople, 1899-1909.
- Crawford, Sir Richard F. (1863-1919). Customs Adviser to the Ottoman Government, 1909-. Adviser to the Ottoman Ministry of Finance, 1911-14. Appointed Minister in the Diplomatic Service, 1914. Commercial Adviser at the Washington Embassy.
- Crewe, Marquess (1858-1945). Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, 1892-5. Secretary of State for the Colonies, 1908-10. Secretary of State for India, 1910-15. President of the Board of Education, 1916. Ambassador at Paris, 1922-8.
- Crowe, Sir Eyre (1864-1925). Clerk in the FO, 1885. Senior Clerk, 1906. Assistant Under-Secretary, 1912-20. Head of the Eastern (and Western) Department, 1913-14. Permanent Under-Secretary, 1920-5. Never Served abroad.
- Djeved, Bey, Councillor and Chargé at the Ottoman Embassy in London, 1908-13.
- Djavid, Pasha (1875-1926). Member of the CUP's 'inner circle' at Salonica and Deputy in the Ottoman Parliament. Minister of Finance, June 1909 - May 1911. Minister of Public Works, Feb. 1912, Finance, May-July 1912, and again from January 1913. Hanged by Mustafa Kemal for 'conspiracy'.
- Durham, Miss M.E. (1863-1944). Balkan Correspondent of the Manchester Guardian Nation etc. Influential at the FO. Strongly sympathised with the Balkan Christians.

Enver, Pasha (1882-1922). Member of the Central Committee of the CUP, 1908. Military Attaché at Berlin, 1909-II. Fought at Tripoli and the Balkans. Promoted to a General and Minister of War in early 1914. Responsible for the Ottomans' entry to World War I on Germany's side. Killed by the Bolsheviks in Turkestan.

Ferdinand, Prince of Coburg (1861-1948). Prince of Bulgaria, 1887. King, 1908-18.

Findlay, Mansfeldt de C. (1861-1932). Minister at Dresden, 1907-9, at Sofia, 1909-II, at Christiania, 1911-23.

Fitzmaurice, Gerald Henry (1865-1939). Student Interpreter, 1888. Acting Vice-Consul, Van, 1891-2, at Erzeroum, 1892-3, at Trebizond, 1893. Acting Third Dragoman at the Embassy, 1894-5. Vice-Consul at Smirna, 1895-6, at Adana, 1896. Third Dragoman, 1897. Consul at Salonica, 1900-1, at the Dardanelles, 1902. British Commissioner for the Aden Frontier Delimitation, 1902. Second Dragoman, 1906. Chief Dragoman, Oct. 1907. - Feb. 1914. Acting Consul-General at Tripoli, Jan.-June 1912. In Paris on special service Dec. 1914-Jan. 1915. On Mission at Sofia, Feb. - Oct. 1915. Employed at the Admiralty, 1915-19. Retired in 1921. Had great influence on Sir G. Lowther.

Ghazi Ahmed Mukhtar Pasha (1839-1918). Made Ghazi for his distinction in the Russ-Ottoman war of 1877. High Commissioner in Egypt, 1885-1906. Made Senator after the 1908 Revolution. President of the Senate, 1911. Grand-Vizier, July-October, 1912.

Giers, Michael de. Russian Minister at Bucharest, 1902-12. Ambassador at Constantinople, 1912-14.

Goltz, Colmar von der (1843-1916). Lecturer in Military History and Germany General. From 1883 in charge of the reorganization of the Ottoman army, until 1895. Again in Constantinople after the break out of World War I. Died while fighting the British in Mesopotamia.

Goschen, Sir William E. (1847-1924). At Constantinople, 1880-1. British Minister at St. Petersburg, 1894. Belgrade, 1898-1900. Ambassador at Vienna, 1905-8, at Berlin, 1908-14.

Graves, Robert W. (1858-1934). Student Interpreter, Constantinople, 1879.

Acting Consul, Jerusalem, 1882, at Alexandria, Sofia, Philipopolis, Crete. Consul-General at Salonica, 1903-7. Adviser on the Macedonian Financial Commission, 1907-9. Adviser to the Ottoman Ministry of Finance, 1909-14. Inspector-General and Adviser to the Ottoman Ministry of the Interior, 1914. Had no real influence on the Porte.

Grey, Sir Edward Viscount Grey of Fallodon, (1862-1933). Parliamentary Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, 1892-5. Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, December 1905 - December 1916. Temporary Ambassador to the U.S.A., 1919.

Hakki, Pasha, Ibrahim (1863-1918). Legal Adviser to the Ottoman Ministry for Foreign Affairs before the Revolution. Influential before 1908 in important matters. After the Revolution Minister for Education and the Interior, 1908-9. Ambassador to Rome, 1909-10. Grand Vizier, Jan. 1910 - Sept. 1911. In charge of the negotiations with the British Government concerning Mesopotamia and the Persian Gulf, 1913-14. Ambassador to Berlin, 1915. Ottoman delegate at Brest-Litovsk Peace Conference, 1918.

Halil, Bey (Menteshe) (1874-1948). Deputy for Menteshe. Leader of the CUP Parliamentary party and President of the Parliament. Supported Enver's pro-German policy in 1914. Minister for Foreign Affairs, 1915-17.

Halim, Pasha, Mehmed Said (1863-1921). Senator after the Revolution. President of the Council of State, 1912. General Secretary of the CUP, 1913. Minister for Foreign Affairs and Grand Vizier, 1913-17. Of no real influence. Assassinated by Armenians in Rome.

Hardinge, Sir Charles, Baron Hardinge of Penshurst (1858-1944). Entered the FO, 1880. At Constantinople, 1881-4. Granted an allowance for the knowledge of Turkish, 1881. Private Secretary to Dufferin. At Berlin, Washington, Sofia and again at Constantinople, 1888. Bucharest, Paris, Tehran (1897-8, Chargé), St. Petersburg. Assistant Under-Secretary

for Foreign Affairs, 1903-4. Ambassador at St. Petersburg, 1904-6. Permanent Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, 1906-10, 1916-20. Viceroy and Governor-General of India, 1910-16. Ambassador at Paris 1920-22.

Hilmi Pasha, Hussein (1855-1923). Inspector-General of Macedonia, 1903-8. Minister of the Interior, 1908-9, of Justice, 1912. Grand Vizier Feb.-December, 1909 (except for the period of the Counter-Revolution). Ambassador at Vienna, 1914-18.

Hirtzel, Sir Arthur F. (1870-1937). Secretary of the Political Department at India Office, 1909-17. Assistant Under-Secretary of State, India Office, 1917-21, Deputy, 1921-4, Permanent Under-Secretary of State, 1924-30.

Izvolzky, Alexander (1856-1919). Served at the Russian diplomatic missions at Bucharest and Washington. Minister at Belgrade, 1896, Munich, Tokyo and Copenhagen. Minister for Foreign Affairs, 1906-10. Ambassador at Paris, 1910-17.

Jahid, Hussein (1875-1957). Deputy for Istanbul. Editor of the "Tanin", the CUP organ and influential in political matters. President of the Parliament, 1914-16.

Jemal Bey, Ahmed (1872-1922). Member of the CUP Central Committee. Vali of Adana, 1909, of Baghdad, 1911. Military Governor of Istanbul, 1913. Minister of Public Works, 1914, of Marine, 1914-. Commander of the Ottoman 4th Army in Syria, 1914-18. Assassinated in Tiflis by Armenians.

Kiamil Pasha, Mehmed (1832-1913). Vali of Aleppo, 1869, of Kossovo, 1877. Minister of Evkaf, 1880. Grand Vizier, 1885, 1891, 1895. Vali of Smyrna, 1895-1907. Grand Vizier, August 1908 - Feb. 1909, October, 1912 - Jan. 1913. The most bitter opponent of the CUP. Although of liberal views and pro-English obtained ^{but} / little support from the British Government.

Kitchener, Horatio Herbert, Earl (1850-1916). Sirdar of the Egyptian Army, 1892. C.-in-C. South-Africa, 1900. C.-in-C. India, 1902-9. Field-Marshal, 1909. Member of the Committee of Imperial Defence, 1909-. Agent and Consul-General in Cairo, 1911-14. Secretary of State for War, 1914-16.

Liman von Sanders, Otto (1855-1929). General and Head of the German Military Mission for the reorganisation of the Ottoman Army, 1913. In charge of the Ottoman German armies at Gallipoli, Syria and Palestine during World War I.

Limpus, Admiral Sir A.H. (1863-1931). British Adviser to the Ottoman Ministry for Marine, 1912-14. Admiral Superintendent and Senior Naval Officer at Malta, 1914-16.

Lorimer, J.D. (1870-1914). Indian Political Department, 1891. Political Resident and Acting Consul-General Baghdad, 1910. Consul-General, 1911. Acting Consul-General at Bushire, 1913-14.

Lowther, Sir Gerard Augustus (1858-1916). Entered the FO, 1879. Served at Madrid, Paris, Constantinople (1884-91), Vienna, Sofia, Bucharest (Chargé), Tokyo, Budapest, Washington (Chargé, 1901). Minister at Santiago, 1901-4, at Tangier, 1905; also Consul-General in Morocco. Ambassador at Constantinople, July 1908- July 1913. Bitter opponent of the CUP.

Lynch, H.F.B. (1862-1913). Writer and Senior partner in the firm of the Lynch Brothers, Eastern Merchants. Travelled extensively in the area between India and the Mediterranean. Partner in the Euphrates Steam Navigation Company.

Mallet, Sir Louis (1864)-1936). Entered the FO, 1888. Appointed to Rio de Janeiro, 1893, to Rome, 1896, to Cairo, 1898-1900. Assistant Clerk, 1902-5. Private Secretary to Grey, 1905-6. Senior Clerk, 1906. Assistant Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, 1907-13, and Head of the Eastern Department. Ambassador at Constantinople, Oct. 1913- Nov. 1914. Assistant Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, 1918. Attached to the

Peace Conference Delegation, 1918-19. Retired, 1920.

Marling, Sir Charles M. (1862-1933). Attaché, 1888. Served at Athens, Constantinople (1891), Rio de Janeiro, Paris, Sofia, Santiago, Bucharest, Crete, Tehran (Chargé, 1907-8, 1910). Counsellor at Constantinople, Oct. 1908 - Oct. 1913. Chargé, Oct. 1909 - Jan. 1910; Nov. 1910 - Jan. 1911; June - July 1911; July - Oct. 1912 - July - Oct. 1913. Minister at Tehran, 1915; at Copenhagen, 1919; at Hague, 1921. Retired, 1926.

Marschall von Bieberstein, Adolf Freiherr (1842-1912). German Secretary for Foreign Affairs, 1890-7. German Ambassador at Constantinople, 1897-1912 at London, 1912.

Mensdorff, Count Albert ^Puilly-Dietrichstein, Austrian Ambassador at London, 1904-14.

Morley, John, Viscount Morley of Blackburn, (1838-1923). Chief Secretary for Ireland, 1886, 1892-5. Secretary of State for India, 1905-10. Lord President of the Council, 1910-14.

Nicolson, Sir Arthur Lord Carnock (1849-1928). Entered the FO, 1871. Served at Berlin, Peking, Constantinople (1879). Superintendent of Student interpreters in Constantinople, 1872. Inspected with Sir C. Wilson the Consulates in Asia Minor and Syria, 1881. Accompanied Dufferin to Egypt, 1882. Athens, Tehran, Budapest, Constantinople (Chargé, 1893), Sofia, Minister at Tangier, Consul-General at Morocco, 1895-1904. Ambassador at Madrid, 1905-6; at St. Petersburg, 1906-10. Permanent Under-Secretary, 1910-16.

Norman, Herman C. (1872-1955). Attaché, 1884; St. Petersburg, 1903-6. Assistant Clerk in the FO, 1906-14 (in the Eastern Department until, 1913). Buenos-Aires, 1914-15; Tokyo, 1915-19. Minister at Tehran, 1920-I. Also served as Secretary to the St. James Conference, 1912-13.

O'Beirne, H.J. (1866-1916). First appointed to Russia, 1892. Served at Washington, Constantinople (1899), Athens, Paris, Counsellor, Chargé and Minister at St. Petersburg, 1906-15. Chargé at Sofia, 1915.

O'Connor, Sir Nicolas R. (1843-1908). Agent and Consul-General Sofia, 1887-9. Minister at China and Corea, 1892-5. Ambassador at St. Petersburg, 1895-8; at Constantinople, 1898-1908.

Ostrorog, Leon. Legal Adviser to the Porte, 1898-1914.

Pallavicini, Jean Marquis von. Austrian Minister at Bucharest, 1899-1906. Ambassador at Constantinople, 1906-18.

Parker, Alwyn (1877-1951). Attaché, 1900. At St. Petersburg. Junior Clerk, 1906. Assistant Clerk, 1912. The FO's expert for the Persian Gulf, Baghdad Railway and Mesopotamia. Head of the Contraband Department, 1914-17. Librarian, 1918. At Paris Peace Conference, 1919. Private Secretary to Hardinge, 1919. Director of Lloyds Bank, 1919-47.

Rifaat Pasha, Mehmed (1860-1925). Ottoman Minister at Athens, 1898-1908. Ambassador at London, 1908-9. Minister for Foreign Affairs, 1909-11. Ambassador at Paris, 1911-14; Ambassador at Berlin, 1918.

Riza, Ahmed (1859-1950). More influential amongst Young Turks in exile than after the Revolution. After 1908 Deputy for Istanbul and President of the Parliament (1908-12). Senator, 1912-.

Rodd, Sir J. Rennel, Baron Rennel, (1858-1941). Served in Berlin, Rome, Paris, Cairo (Acting Consul-General, 1894-1900), Athens. Ambassador at Rome, 1908-19. Member of Milner's Mission to Egypt. British Representative to the League of Nations, 1921, 3.M.P. 1928-32.

Ryan, Sir Andrew (1876-1949). Student Interpreter in the Levant, 1897. Vice-Consul, Constantinople and Uskub. Second Dragoman in the British Embassy at Constantinople, 1907. Acting Chief Dragoman June 1911- July 1912+ Feb. 1914 - Nov. 1914. Political Officer at Constantinople, 1918; Chief Dragoman, 1921. Minister at Jedda, 1930; at Durazzo, 1936. Retired 1939.

Eaid Pasha, Mehmed Kuchuk (1838-1914). First Secretary to Abdul Hamid, 1876. Grand Vizier, 1879, 1882-5, 1895, 1901-3, 22 July - 5 August 1908. September 1911 - July 1912.

Sazonov, Sergei Count (1861-1927). Counsellor and Chargé at the Russian Embassy in London, 1904-6. At Washington; at the Vatican, 1906-9. Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs, 1909-10. Minister for Foreign Affairs, 1910-16.

Shevket Pasha, Mahmud (1856-1913). Vali of Kossovo at the time of the Young Turk Revolution. As Commander of the Third Army in Macedonia defeated the Counter-Revolution in April 1909. Inspector-General of the first three armies. Minister of War in Hakki's Cabinet, Jan. 1910 - July 1912. Grand Vizier, Jan. - June 1913.

Talaat Pasha, Mehmed (1874-1921). Leading member of the CUP. Deputy for Edirne after the 1908 Revolution. Minister for the Interior, July 1909 - Feb. 1911. Minister of Post and Telegraph, Jan. - July 1912. Leader of the CUP parliamentary party. Minister for the Interior, 1913-. Grand Vizier, 1917-18. Assassinated in Berlin.

Tcharykov, M.N. (1855-1930). First Secretary at the Russian Embassy at Constantinople, 1890-3; also at Cairo, 1892, Berlin, Sofia (1896), Belgrade, 1900. Assistant Secretary for Foreign Affairs, 1908-9. Ambassador at Constantinople, 1909-12.

Tewfik Pasha, Ahmed (1845-1936). Served at the Ottoman Embassies at Rome, Berlin and Athens (Chargé). Ambassador at St. Petersburg and Berlin, 1885. Minister for Foreign Affairs, 1895-1909. Grand Vizier during the Counter-Revolution, April 1909. Ambassador to London, 1909-14. Grand Vizier, 1919-20.

Tilley, Sir John A.C. (1869-1952). Entered the FO, 1893. Assistant Clerk, 1904. First Secretary at Constantinople, August 1906-August 1908. Again at the FO, September 1908 (in the Eastern Department until March 1909). Acting Senior Clerk, Feb. 1909. Senior Clerk, 1910. (African Department). Assistant Under-Secretary at the FO, 1919. Ambassador at Rio de Janeiro, 1921-6; at Tokyo, 1926. Retired 1931.

Tyrrell, G. E. (1871-1917). Lieut. - Col. Attached to the Macedonian gendarmerie, 1907-9. Military Attaché at Constantinople Embassy, 1909-13; also at Athens, 1909-11; at Sofia, 1911-13.

Tyrrell, William G. Baron (1866-1947). Entered the FO, 1889. Private Secretary to Sanderson, 1896-1903. Secretary to the Committee of Imperial Defence, 1903-4; at Rome, 1904. Senior Clerk and Private Secretary to Grey, 1907-15. A friend of G.H. Fitzmaurice and influential at the FO. Permanent Under-Secretary, 1925-8. Ambassador to Paris, 1928-34.

Vambéry, Arminius (1832-1913). Professor at Budapest University for Oriental languages. Travelled extensively in the Orient and Central Asia. British agent at Constantinople.

Vansittart, Robert G. Baron of Denham (1881-1957). Attaché, 1902. Served at Cairo, 1909-11; Assistant, Clerk, 1914. Private Secretary to Curzon 1920-4. Assistant Under-Secretary and Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister, 1928-30. Permanent Under-Secretary, 1930-8. Chief Diplomatic Adviser to the Cabinet, 1938-41.

Wangenheim, Baron von. Minister at the German Mission at Athens. Ambassador at Constantinople, 1912-15.

Willcocks, Sir William (1852-1932). Served at the Indian Public Works Department, 1872-83. Egyptian Public Works Department, 1883-97; projected and designed the Aswan Dam, 1898. Employed by the Ottoman Ministry for Public Works as Adviser on Irrigation (Mesopotamia), 1909-11.

Zinoview, M. Russian Ambassador at Constantinople, 1898-1909.

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